

# **To the Desertmaker**

**and other writings for  
malcontents**



**ziq**

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**& Other Essays for  
Malcontents**

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# To the Desertmaker

*I see you, creature. I see what you do.*

You drill holes into Terra's skull, drench their flesh with poison, pull their hair out by the handful, hack off their limbs, drain the blood from their veins and burn it. This you call growth, development, progress.

Day and night you grind Terra's bones into powder to erect your grotesque eidola to death all across their bloodied torso. This you call your mighty civilization. A tangled mess of concrete, steel and plastic pointed towards me so I am forced to look upon it.

You direct your servants to build your towers higher and higher. After all, you are very special! The civilized, sophisticated, highly respected creature! Behold the important executive in the tailor-made suit, shoes crafted from the finest alligator hide! What an impressive specimen! What a handsome creature you are!

You're lifted to the top of your tallest



tower so you can perch yourself in your opulent shrine to the wealth you have plucked from Terra's body. You stand high and gaze down at the wretched souls below, making sure every one of them knows you rule over them, that Terra is your personal dominion. Your private property to use and abuse as you please.

*I see you, creature. I see what you do.*

You have demolished their sublime mountains to construct your shopping malls and marinas. You have drained their great lakes to plant your carefully manicured golf courses. Felled their majestic forests to graze your billion cows. Desecrated their vast oceans with your rotten, putrid waste.

You're driven to control Terra, to change the course of their rivers, to reshape their shorelines and modify their lifeforms to suit your rapacious appetite. You can't fathom of a world where you don't own the earth below your feet; posses everything Terra created as your own.

You are imperious to assume Terra will be so affected by a fleetingly short-lived and short-sighted creature as yourself. If it takes a million of your lifetimes, Terra will wash away the volumes of excrement you have soiled their

surface with.

You spent your wretched life desperately cutting your name into Terra's flesh, but Terra's wounds will callus over, creature. Long after the arrogant grin you wear on your lips has turned to dust with the rest of your foul corpse, Terra will regenerate. All the beautiful, disparate beasts you have eradicated during your brief gluttonous tantrum will be reborn. The trees will rise again in magnificent groves as far as the eye can see. Everything you took will be reclaimed.

For a while, Terra will be rendered as desolate as I. A vast desert of your creation. But in time, the stench of death you brought will be lifted and the oceans will come back to life. Then the land and then the skies.

I move synchronous to Terra, following their every movement. We are in rhythm together, Terra and I. We have danced this dance for longer than you can conceive.

*I see you, creature. I see what you do. I see what you are. I see every desperate grasp for power. Every sordid manipulation and abuse to cement your position on the top floor of the tallest tower. The wasted lives of those you have coerced into your service.*

You think yourself so evolved, creature.  
You look down at all you have plundered, and  
you think yourself worthy of Terra's grace.  
You have laid waste to Terra's resplendence  
and you and your kind will suffer terribly for it.  
Everything you know will die a senseless death.  
Every child you bear from your loins will die  
horribly, their potential wasted.

To think of all the creative, wonderful  
things your servants could have manifested  
without the chains you encumbered them with.  
So much wonder will never come to pass be-  
cause of your covetous rampage.

I have forever been locked to Terra.  
Though we have never touched, I feel as if I am  
an extension of them. Though I am devoid of  
life myself, I assist in birthing all life on Terra. I  
drive their tides; transport heat from their equa-  
tor to their poles, arousing the cycle of life.

As everything around you collapses into  
ruin, you will no doubt retreat from your fetid  
towers in the sky and escape deep into Terra's  
ground. There, you will cower and hide from  
the rapidly unfolding chaos you wrought on the  
world above. You will surely use your immense  
wealth to cling to life for as long as you can, but  
eventually your time will run out.

As you lay in your reinforced underground bunker clasping your last tank of air, awaiting your end, and everyone that toiled in drudgery to serve you is dead and forgotten, think of everything you have accomplished during your brief existence. Think of the endless suffering you wrought on Terra's lands to claim such fleeting, pointless rewards for yourself. Think of the deep emptiness inside you and how none of your misbegotten wealth could ever fill it. And now think of me.

It is time. Arise from your living tomb, creature. Climb the steps to the surface. Stumble out into the dark and face me!

Look upon the vast desert that stands in testament to the miserable carnage you forged. Watch as Terra burns. Gaze upon the fires and take pleasure in the knowledge that you actualized all your perverse power machinations. You dominated every being under you. Used their labor to grow your wealth to unparalleled levels. Stole their lives to grant yourself ever more fame, power, and luxury. You defeated all your competitors, accumulated all the capital you possibly could, and now you get to stand and witness the end of everything you knew.

Look and see, creature. Look how your

desert is eclipsed by my shining glow in the night sky. Look up at me, creature. Look up as I look down on you. Choke on Terra's stale, toxic air. Hear me laugh heartily as you breathe your last desperate breath and are finally engulfed by the fires you lit.

This is a great victory for you. Your life ends here in the great desert you made and no one is left to curse your name for all the hurt you did.

Absurd creature, imagining you could stand above the ancient, primal life that sprouted you. Thinking your time spent bludgeoning all other lifeforms into submission somehow significant. Terra has seen you and all you are and has washed their hands of you.

Long after your corpse has disintegrated into a pile of sand, I will send tidal waves to wash away whatever ruins remain of your brief, rancid civilization. Then volcanoes will rise from Terra's belly, lava will spew into the oceans and form new lands. Life will thrive again. Terra will be reborn.

And let us hope none of the new creatures Terra bears during their rebirth will be as noxious and destructive as you, senseless desertmaker.

# What is Anarchy?

## **What Anarchy Means to Me**

Anarchy is the opposition to authority, the rejection of hierarchy and the unending struggle for autonomy and self-determination.

Anarchy is above all a practice, not a theory. It is about actively working to end authoritarian relationships wherever they exist, and build non-authoritarian alternatives.

It is not about trying to prescribe a way of life for an imagined place and time, and imagined people. It is for real people and dealing with real problems.

Anarchy is a living and breathing praxis that we incorporate into our everyday lives. A personal stance against authority that informs all our decisions and thus shapes the trajectory of our existence.

There is no end-goal to anarchy. It is an ongoing, unending fight against hierarchical

systems and the authority figures that construct them.

Anarchy is a desire for freedom from tyranny. Anarchy is countless generations of disparate people with the drive to be freer than they are under the systems that forcibly govern them.

## **Developing Anarchist Praxis**

When we talk to people about anarchy, they often ask, “how practical is it? Can you demonstrate anarchy to me, so that I can appreciate its effectiveness?” Praxis is how we show anarchy working.

Praxis is any action that embodies and realizes anarchy. It’s a valuable method for creating awareness of anarchist causes and building solidarity in your community.

There are countless examples of anarchist praxis. Online communities like [anarchistnews.org](http://anarchistnews.org) or [raddle.me](http://raddle.me) are examples of anarchist praxis, as they demonstrate anarchist management and create community, solidarity, education, and opportunities to organize. Setting up a Food Not Bombs chapter in your community is great praxis. Squatting an unused building to provide a safe space for homeless people. Starting a free shop that people can freely take what

they need from. Building community gardens to feed and engage the community. Preparing free meals for refugees in your country. Making a zine or a podcast about an important topic to raise awareness and open a dialogue. Creating and disseminating memes from an Anarchist perspective. Assassinating a dictator. Creating an autonomous zone. Stopping pipelines from being built. Teaching people to be self-sufficient by gardening, foraging for food, and upcycling. Forming a human chain to stop cops from arresting migrants. Teaching self-defence. Closing roads and ports to inhibit global trade. Starting an anarchist bike collective to fix people's bikes. Flying a drone near an airport. Making music that shines a light on injustices in the world. Setting up a community mesh-net to share data with your community in a decentralized manner.

These are just some examples of good things anarchists do in our communities every day. Just writing about this and perhaps inspiring some people to do anarchy is praxis.





# Indigenous Anarchy: The Need for a Rejection of the Colonizer's Civilization

First, let's define some basic terms. *Indigenous* means "of the land we are actually on." Anarchy means "rejecting authority." The principles of anarchism include direct action, mutual aid, and voluntary cooperation. *Anarchy; A Journal of Desire Armed* envisions a primitive anarchy that is "radically cooperative and communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild."

Civilization is a culture that revolves around cities. A city is a collection of people who live permanently in one place, in densities

high enough that they must import their food and resources from outside the city in order to survive and ensure the continued growth of the city. So, cities depend on the exploitation of external bodies to maintain themselves.

This externalisation alienates us from both our food supply and our waste. Our food is purchased from a supermarket, grown far from home, prepared and packaged on an assembly line. We are denied any participation in the processes that feed us. Our garbage gets trucked away to be disposed of somewhere out of our immediate sight, and our human waste is flushed down pipes. We don't fully know where it goes, what it affects, what place it has in our ecosystem.

Civilization aims to dominate life through its various structures that are designed to domesticate us. These structures include industry, colonialism, statism, capitalism, agriculture, racism, schooling, religion, media, police, prisons, the military, the patriarchy, slavery, and more.

Indigenous peoples throughout history have fought and died to resist the forceful encroachment of civilization into their lives. This struggle continues today, as the uncivilized are pushed closer and closer to the edge of sur-

vival by the civilized all over the world, and the technological imbalance between us continues to expand and create a sociological divide that renders us unable to understand each other on even a basic level.

The lifestyles of the civilized and the uncivilized have diverged to such an extent that it has become near-impossible for the civilized to see that their civilization has become an obstacle to our basic survival. Instead, they hold their civilization up as the instrument of their survival and fear living in a world without it. They are so conditioned to the order of their civilization that they can't fathom a life in its absence.

The entire concept of *civilization* depends on the rule of the colonizer and his brutal subjugation of indigenous peoples. The perpetual march of global civilization is fed by the forced labor and the exploitation of natural resources in the global South (and historically, all lands beyond the European continent).

In order to strip the land of its resources, the people that live on the land need to be displaced and moved to tightly-packed cities, farms, or reservations where they will be forced to labor to turn those resources into consumer products for Western markets. This process of

civilizing indigenous peoples is rapid, and our culture, language, and history is often forcibly extinguished by the colonizers to ensure we don't attempt a return to our previous uncivilized lives and reclaim those lands that they have taken for their industry.

The ruling classes are always looking for new avenues to accumulate wealth for themselves. Rulers create subservient underclasses by depriving uncivilized peoples of their natural habitats so they have no choice but to accept domestication and be integrated into the industrial capitalist system. The ruler can then successfully convert the people they have tamed and domesticated into profitable commodities; docile workers that can labor their whole lives to create more wealth for the ruler.

A ruler sees no use for a hunter-gatherer or any person that is not creating wealth and power for the ruler. If people didn't need to work for rulers to acquire food and shelter, rulers would cease to have power. So the worst enemy of the ruler is a person that doesn't depend on rulers to survive, or worse; an entire culture of self-sufficient people. An uncivilized culture that he has no control over is a ruler's worst fear.

Under civilization, no longer will indig-

enous peoples be permitted to survive off of their ancestral lands, hunting and foraging. Now to survive in this new world forced on us by the colonizers, we must endure back-breaking labor in factories, warehouses, mines and industrial farms. Our children must be educated in the ways of the colonizers; to shape them into productive and submissive workers. We must depend on the state and colonizers to feed and clothe us. We must consume and waste and participate in destroying the ecosystems that sustained us for millennia. We must be “civilized” so that the ruling class may prosper at our expense.

### **Freedom Through Rejection**

To reject civilization is to oppose this coercive arrangement where our history, our culture, and the collective knowledge that allowed us to survive and prosper on our land is taken from us by profiteering industrialists who would have us devote our entire lives to laboring for their benefit as they deny us access to our own lands and resources.

To reject civilization is to oppose urbanization; the cramming of people into small, barren, concreted areas that can be more easily controlled by our rulers to stop us from breaking with their demands that we be “civilized” and obedient.

To reject civilization is to oppose exploitative industrial agricultural methods that force the rural poor to sacrifice their labor to feed the materially wealthy cities, while rapidly despoiling the land of its fertility and sapping the groundwater for irrigation at a much faster rate than it can be replenished.

Civilization depends on a massively unequal concentration of wealth; a brutal capitalist hierarchy where the few that have been lucky enough to climb to the top control everyone beneath them. At the very bottom of civilization's hierarchy are the indigenous peoples of the world.

### **Control and Domestication**

The voices of indigenous peoples, whether they are accepted by their colonizers as successfully civilized, or rejected as uncivilized, have been long ignored by everyone who benefits from the march of civilization and the shiny things it gives them. Shiny things made possible by the rampant exploitation of indigenous lands and the manipulation and control of indigenous peoples through domestication.

*Control* is the key word to understanding why civilization has come into being. The

capitalist colonizers work hard to convince us that we need to be controlled by them and their civilization. That we need their civilization to protect us from harm. If we labor for them, we won't go hungry. If we give them our lands and relocate to their "reservations" or their farms or their cities, adopt their language and religion, they will give us protection, allow us to survive with "dignity," accept us as successfully domesticated and civilized.

The irony to this is staggering. The colonizers decimate our forests and slice open our land to empty it of its resources. They slaughter our wildlife to extinction and douse our plant life with herbicides to ensure we can't sustain ourselves. They render our water toxic and undrinkable. They destroy our climate with their burning of carbon. They murder us if we dare stand in their way.

And then they offer us sanctuary from their tyranny. A choice between enslavement or extinction. Move to their cities, slums, plantations and reservations and be accepted as civilized, or die at their hands for being subhuman uncivilized savages who can't be saved. Anything civilization can't control must be purged to ensure the march of civilization continues



without obstacle.

To embrace anarchy is to oppose the very idea of control. To reject the authority of the colonizer and his coercive civilization that takes so much from us to provide comforts to cultures that would sooner see us slaughtered than threaten their industry-fueled lifestyles. Anarchy is trusting in ourselves and our neighbors to work together through mutual aid to solve our own problems, without needing the charity of powerful authorities.

Anti-civ indigenous anarchists recognize that the very concept of civilization depends on our colonizers' ability to control us. Our forced assimilation into the colonizers' alien civilization, and the punitive laws we're forced to obey are designed to keep us from resisting the perverse order our colonizers force on us. Their order depends on our domestication and the destruction of our way of life. Their civilization is designed to destroy everything it touches.

### **Embracing our “Inhospitable Wilderness”**

The so-called “inhospitable wilderness” that civilization has seen fit to beat into submission is the lifeblood of our existence. For millennia, we lived in peace with this wilderness, nurturing

it as much as it nurtured us. We were caretakers of the land, rather than exploiters of it. Now, as civilized people, we labor for a lifetime for the right to assert ownership over a tiny piece of the land, so that we may pave it over and erect a concrete block to live in. If we are successful. Most of us don't even get this privilege and are forced to pay wealthy landlords for the right to live in one of the concrete blocks *they* own.

Uncivilized, we roamed freely. Wild fruit and herbs grew in every direction, ready for the picking. Freshwater streams filled with fish dotted the landscape. The sounds of wildlife filled the air. Our labor was minimal and the rewards were instantaneous. We only knew abundance. Or, more accurately: affluence without abundance.

Hunter-gatherers are able to meet their immediate needs without needing to stockpile a surplus the way civilized people must to survive (with agriculture, jobs, loans, savings, mortgages, pensions, insurance). The uncivilized have no want of material possessions because such frivolous things would stand in the way of their ability to live nomadically with the seasons. Having too many possessions forces us to stay in one place at all times to guard those possessions with our lives, so that we can continue

to possess them and not risk them being taken from us. It creates a paranoid security-centric lifestyle that puts owning and protecting property above our most basic needs.

Hunter-gatherers can trust that the environment will provide for us, that going for a walk to hunt or forage will give us and our loved ones all the food and water we'll need for a few days. After taking that walk, the rest of the day is wide open for leisure.

Civilized people love to refer to hunter-gatherers as being stricken by poverty. But this poverty is a material poverty; a lack of surplus, luxuries, things. In real terms, hunter-gatherers are far richer than the perpetually in-debt civilized workers who have little room for leisure and must measure their entire existence in terms of time. The civilized, in their agriculture-based societies, must work 5 or 6 days a week simply to survive. The uncivilized have no desire for such absurdities. As Marshall Sahlins noted, hunter-gatherers are the original affluent society. With no material needs, there is no need for poverty or wealth. All people may be equal; a true anarchy.

Civilized people plant rows of crops in fenced-in, sterilized industrial monocultures that barely resemble the diverse mutually-sustaining

interconnected food forests that fed us throughout history. Farmers repeatedly strain the same plots of land year after year to grow these single crops, soaking them with chemical fertilizers and pesticides so nothing but the monocrop can survive. The soil is eroded, barren of life, dependent on the chemical concoctions the farmer must go into debt to procure.

In civilization, water is scarce, controlled, and expensive. Fruit comes wrapped in plastic and you must labor in misery for a full day to afford it. Fish is contaminated by the toxic waste that industry spews into waterways, and yet we still are charged for the privilege of eating it. Wildlife has been largely replaced by vast expanses of caged livestock. The endless excrement from these industrial meat facilities also pours into the waterways, further poisoning the ecosystem and sterilizing the land.

The wildness that once defined us has been coerced out of us by our colonizers. Like dogs bred from wild wolves to be obedient and subservient to their masters, we have come to depend on the state and capitalists for our basic survival. Sick and domesticated, we fight each other for the scraps of food thrown down to us by the rulers who deprive us of our land and our very lives.

## Understanding Neo-Colonialism

Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah succinctly explained Neo-colonialism in 1965:

*The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. The methods and form of this direction can take various shapes. (Most) often, neo-colonialist control is exercised through economic or monetary means. Control over government policy in the neo-colonial State may be secured by payments towards the cost of running the State, by the provision of civil servants in positions where they can dictate policy, and by monetary control over foreign exchange through the imposition of a banking system controlled by the imperial power.*

This description of neo-colonialism still rings true today, with indigenous cultures all over the world experiencing what Nkrumah described in its various forms. Most recently, Chinese neo-colonialists have flowed into indigenous lands, promising to lift us up with

their wealth. Their investors, bankers, traders, lenders, developers and charities all promise to improve our lives for the better.

African countries are especially incurring massive debt to Beijing, offering up their land, oil, gas, minerals and other resources as collateral for every new billion-dollar loan they take out. When they inevitably default on these unsustainable loans, China will seize the collateral and strip the continent of its natural wealth. Malaysia recently realized the dangers of this debt trap and pulled out of Chinese development deals. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad warned the world, "there is a new version of Colonialism happening."

The non-profit Confucius Institute that operates in indigenous lands is a vehicle for Chinese propaganda, restricting what can be said by the teachers they supply from China, distorting what students learn. This propaganda-via-schooling is designed to promote China's economic interests by conditioning indigenous children to accept colonization and a life of subservience. Colonizers go to great lengths to normalize the terror they bring and convince us it is good for us.

Kwame Nkrumah:

*Neo-colonialism might be also the worst*

*form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case.*

Similarly to China, South Korea and its multinational corporations have bought farming rights to millions of hectares of agricultural land in “under-developed” countries, in order to secure food resources for their citizens. The history of colonialism and banana republics have shown us that this kind of arrangement has only led to misery for indigenous peoples and the degradation of our lands.

South Korea’s RG Energy Resources Asset Management CEO Park Yong-soo:

*The (South Korean) nation does not produce a single drop of crude oil and other key industrial minerals. To power economic growth and support people’s livelihoods, we cannot emphasize too much that securing*

*natural resources in foreign countries is a must for our future survival.*

The head of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Jacques Diouf, warned that the rise in these land deals could create a form of neocolonialism, with poorer regions producing food for the rich at the expense of their own hungry people. It's safe to say that this latest form of neocolonialism has already arrived, and our corrupt governments are signing deals that make us increasingly dependent on these foreign nations and their promises to "lift us up" by building us cities and infrastructure.

It's integral that we resist their attempts to civilize our lands; to force us to labor for them; to help them steal our natural resources to grow their empires so they may expand further and exploit more indigenous populations across the world.

And our local authorities, who are so quick to sell our futures for the fleeting luxuries of concrete towers and faster trains are just as culpable in this neo-colonial push to shape us into the beggared workers of foreign empires.

The Maasai, a semi-nomadic tribe that inhabits mostly Tanzania and Kenya, have been migrating with the seasons for centuries. They



have increasingly been pushed out of their land by the states and business interests that collude to write laws that prohibit them from cultivating plants and grazing their animals on large tracts of their traditional land.

Tens of thousands of Maasai were left homeless after their homes in the Ngorongoro Crater sightseeing area were set on fire, supposedly to “preserve the region’s ecosystem” and attract more tourists.

The Tanzanian government works with Tanzania Conservation Limited, which is owned by the US-based Thomson Safaris and Ortello Business Corporation (a luxury hunting company based in the United Arab Emirates), to drive the Maasai off of their land. They’re beaten, shot, and their property is confiscated. Young herders are so frightened that they now run whenever they see a vehicle approaching, fearing for their lives.

The state has now ordered the Maasai people to leave their homeland so it can be turned into a hunting ground for affluent tourists who pay a premium to shoot big game animals and take the carcasses home with them as stuffed trophies.

The state aids in these genocidal acts to

secure foreign investment to build its cities. The state will always put the civilized before the uncivilized because the entire reason a state exist is to grow its cities and plunder food and resources to feed that growth.

Civilization has always been the weapon used by the powerful to condemn us to a life of servitude. Reject civilization. Reject the state. Reject capitalism. Reject all attempts to conquer our lands and enslave our peoples.

### **Looking a Gift-Horse in the Mouth: The Technological Divide**

We should understand that there's a big difference between "tools" and "technology." Tools can be made on a small-scale with local materials, either by individuals or small groups of people on occasions when the tools are needed. Unlike technology, tools don't construct systems of authority and obedience to allow one group to dominate another, just so long as everyone is able to realistically create or acquire tools on their own. Technology depends on the ability to mount immense operations of extraction, production, distribution, and consumption. This demands coercive authority and hierarchy. Oppression.

*The Fifth Estate* explained the pitfalls of technology in 1981.

*Technology is not a simple tool which can be used in any way we like. It is a form of social organization, a set of social relations. It has its own laws. If we are to engage in its use, we must accept its authority. The enormous size, complex interconnections, and stratification of tasks that make up modern technological systems make authoritarian command necessary and independent, individual decision-making impossible.*

Technology is used by rulers to control and pacify their citizens. The societies of the colonists are laden with technological marvels. But their people are detached from the land they live on, alienated from each other, their eyes constantly fixated on mindless distractions emanating from their screens, as their lands dry up and burn to pay for their addiction to these toxic industrial products.

Technology is used to conquer, to assert dominance, to destroy entire cultures that dare to reject the empire's world order. Libya, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, entire countries decimated by the great technology of the imperialists, raining death down from the skies.

The colonizers will always have better technology than us. Whatever technologies they promise us in return for our cooperation with their agenda will pale in comparison to the technologies that drive their own societies. They'll tell us we need their technology to be civilized, to avoid falling behind the rest of the world, but there is no catching up with the empire's machine. It will grind us up and churn us out long before it ever gives up the secrets it promises.

Technology is a weapon wielded by the most powerful and there is no way for us to ever match that power, so why try? Why dedicate our lives to playing their game, by their rules? To receive their obsolete cast-offs in return? They use their technology to convince us that we are less than them, that we are backwards and that they need to save us from our savage existence. They say all this while their technological supremacy depends on our resources and our labor, on them being able to coerce us into sacrificing ourselves and our children and our children's children to give them the fuel for their big important machines. Machines that allow them to maintain their dominance over us, so that we remain perpetually inferior to them. If they ever gave us what they promise; the liberation

they say their technology will bring, their power over us would be lost. We would no longer need them to save us from our wildness because we would be as civilized as them.

When we give up so much of ourselves so that they will give us their technology, they make sure we will need them to maintain it. We become dependent on their technology, and thus dependent on them to continue feeding it to us and to fix it when it breaks. Our lives begin to revolve around the technology and we forget how to live without it. And while we're distracted by the calming glow of our little screens, our ecosystems are decimated by the colonists.

Technology is a carrot on a stick and it cannot liberate us, only domesticate and enslave us. Reject it. Reject being measured by our technological prowess or how civilized we are. Reject the colonizer and his false gifts and manipulations. Reject his civilization. Reject his control over who we are and who we will be.

# **Fuck Your Red Revolution: Against Ecocide, Towards Anarchy**

## **Let Go of Your Tedious Slogans**

“There’s no ethical consumption under capitalism” is a tired slogan that I wish would die. So often it is used by reds to pooh-pooh those of us who strive to make life choices to reduce harm in our communities and in our natural environments.

Vegan diets, bicycling, dumpster diving, upcycling, guerilla gardening, permaculture, squatting, illegalism, food forestry, communes, self-sufficiency, and all the other so-called lifestyle pursuits that individualist anarchists

undertake to minimize their harm on the environment are shamed and mocked by many anarcho-communists, social ecologists, anarcho-transhumanists, syndicalists, and other industry-upholding anarchists. These reds are well versed in workerist rhetoric, and see all lifestyle choices as a distraction from the global proletarian revolution that is their singular goal.

You'll hear them talk down to other anarchists who are discussing ethical ways to curtail their consumption, especially people that live off the land or otherwise limit their participation in industrial civilization; people they loudly dismiss and condemn as "primmies" or "lifestylists".

They'll tell us to stop living our lives in the pursuit of personal anarchy because "there's no ethical consumption under capitalism". In the red mind, as long as a capitalist system has been imposed on the world, there's no point in reaching for anarchy until that system has been overthrown and replaced with their system. Regardless of how unlikely it is that this will happen in our lifetimes.

Using "no ethical consumption" to shame people for making the effort to live more conscientiously, and decrying all individual action as "counter-revolutionary" or "liberal" comes from

a deeply authoritarian mindset reminiscent of toxic Maoist purges that punished people for dressing differently or having hobbies or doing anything but devote themselves 100% to destructive industrial labor and the glory of “the revolution” (almost always manifested in the form of a red state).

The red influence in anarchist discourse is unfortunately dominant in most developed parts of the world, and collectivist-minded anarchists insist every anarchist devote themselves to their pipe dream of a mass uprising to seize the factories from the capitalists and turn them over to the workers. They postulate that democratized factories will be more beneficial to workers because they’ll receive a bigger piece of the industrial pie. This is true. But then they claim their ideology will “save the environment” because a worker collective won’t be greedy and destructive like a capitalist board of directors. This is of course completely unfounded and blatantly ignores the history of collectivized industry and its devastating effects on the environment. The glaring reality is that industrial societies all eventually lead to ecocide, without exception.

Countless Marxist revolutions in history did so much damage to the environment that



entire territories, such as the area surrounding Chernobyl, were rendered uninhabitable to humans. Babies continue to be born with birth defects today, and cancer rates in the regions devastated by socialist industry continue to be sky-high.

Let's take a brief look at the former USSR's legacy of careless industrial destruction, with three examples.

The Ural River in Magnitogorsk, Russia, is still saturated with toxic boron and chromium levels from the nearby steelworks, poisoning the entire ecosystem.<sup>1</sup>

The Aral Sea, once the fourth-largest inland water body in the world, was largely replaced by the newly-emerged Aralkum Desert after the Soviets drained two rivers for irrigation. The sea is now just 10 percent of its original size.<sup>2</sup>

Run-off from oil fields near Baku have

1 "Soviet Pollution: A Lethal Legacy," Gerd Ludwig Photography: <https://www.gerdludwig.com/stories/soviet-pollution-a-lethal-legacy/>

2 "How Soviet pollution destroyed the Aral Sea," Witness, BBC World Service, 21 Oct 2015

"Aralkum Desert: The World's Newest Desert", Geography Realm: <https://www.geographyrealm.com/aralkum-desert-worlds-newest-desert/>

rendered all the local water bodies biologically dead, killing off every lifeform, some of which prospered in those ecosystems for millennia.<sup>3</sup>

These are just a few examples of devastating ecocide caused by the push for industrial growth (which is required to achieve communism according to Marx), and they of course only ever achieved more capitalism and more misery, because industrialism and the continued pursuit of menial labor will not liberate people.

Changing from a vertical to a horizontal hierarchy will benefit the industrial workers in some material ways, certainly, but the wholesale destruction of our planet will not slow down one bit just by instituting a powershift from bosses to workers. Industrial production depends on non-stop growth, and when you tie the success of a society to industrial production, you create a recipe for disaster. Workers won't vote to scale down their industry or its environmental impact as their livelihoods depend on their industry's growth.

And they certainly won't care about anyone

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3 "Soviet Pollution: A Lethal Legacy," Gerd Ludwig Photography, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1078699.html>  
"Azerbaijan: Sumgayit Becomes One Of World's Most-Polluted Cities" <https://www.rferl.org/a/1078699.html>

who isn't also an industrial worker, or preserving foreign ways of life. Indigenous people and anyone living off the land will effectively be seen by red society as an undesirable out-group. Anyone who can't measure up to workerist standards of productivity will be seen as a strain on the industrial grind, an enemy of the red revolution.

Any "counter-revolutionary" rebel who dares stand in the way of industrial growth and the spread of industry across land and sea is effectively a liability that needs to be expunged to safeguard the revolution. This is the power of the collective. Comply or be crushed. Red or dead.

So you see, the people parroting "no ethical consumption under capitalism" at you don't actually have any intention of curbing their destructive consumption, even under communism. Even under anarcho-communism. If anything, they hope to increase their consumption by acquiring more spending power. With communism, they'll be able to consume as much as a middle-management boss does under capitalism because all workers will receive an equal share (until resources run out and their society collapses, a simple reality they have no interest in acknowledging).

You cannot grow infinitely on a finite plan-

et, and all industrial ideologies, regardless of whether they brand themselves as “libertarian” or “authoritarian” seem to ignore that simple fact because it would expose their ideology as having zero long-term viability in a world already experiencing unprecedented global collapse.

## **Harm Reduction is Valuable**

There’s always a more ethical alternative to everything. That’s the whole point of anarchy, to analyze our actions and our impact on our environment and limit harm, counter authority as much as possible. Ethics isn’t an all or nothing proposition—there are varying degrees of harm.

Just because some solutions aren’t 100% pure and wonderful doesn’t mean they’re not worth doing, over much more harmful alternatives. Anarchy is about subverting authority by finding more ethical solutions to every problem we come across.

Here’s an example of several levels of harm reduction that can measurably make a difference, things that stone-faced reds will no doubt decry as lifestyle simply because they don’t succeed in immediately overthrowing capitalism and bringing on a communist utopia:

*Eating vegan locally-grown pesticide-free*

*unprocessed food is absolutely more ethical than eating imported processed meat.*

Why?

Far less carbon is burned to grow, store, transport, process, store again, and re-transport the food. Workers involved in organic agriculture aren't exposed to the much more dangerous conditions of slaughterhouses, battery farms, pesticides, ships, and warehouses. Far less animal suffering and death goes into producing the food. These are real metrics.

There are of course still many downsides to for-profit agriculture including desertification, exploitation of migrant labor, and destruction of native ecosystems to plant monocultures. But it's still much better than the alternative which ensures far greater harm by every metric... For instance, the container ships that transport imported food and industrial products burn highly-polluting "bunker fuel;" the tarry goo that's left over when all the higher quality fuels like petrol, diesel, and kerosene have been extracted from crude oil. In 2009, confidential data was leaked showing that a single container ship

produces as much pollution as 50 million cars.<sup>4</sup> The ship workers will be the first to breathe in these highly-concentrated fumes. Avoiding imported food goes a long way in fighting exploitation.

*Buying seeds/cuttings/grafts and growing your own food in a community garden, as well as dumpster diving from outside supermarkets is more ethical than buying locally-grown food from a for-profit business.*

Why?

Even less carbon is burned, waste is diverted from landfills, there are no workers to exploit or endanger, there is no animal suffering and death (if you use no-till methods). You control everything that goes into the soil (and ultimately your community's bodies) and can thus stave off desertification and actually improve the soil and rebuild the ecosystem.

Downsides: Native flora is displaced in favor of domesticated food crops. Land ownership feeds the state via taxes (unless you use squatted land to plant the garden). Living in a city means you'll still be con-

4 "Nabu annual report on cruise ship pollution" 2017 edition, <https://en.nabu.de/news/2017/23046.html>

suming a lot of things you can't produce yourself in your limited space. But again, this is a measurable improvement over the previous scenario.

*Moving out of the city to a rural area and living as a subsistence farmer to grow all your own food in a food forest you plant, giving away or trading your surplus. Foraging for food where it's sustainable to do so. Planting trees on every unused piece of land you see.*

Why?

Erosion and desertification is effectively stopped in its tracks wherever food forests rise. The trees clean the air of carbon. Trees are the plants best by far at evapotranspiration, and are integral to the water-cycle that all lifeforms depend on. The climate in the area is safeguarded, with increased humidity and rainfall.

Forest gardening rewilds the planet. Pre-civilized peoples made the rainforests as abundant as they are by curating them and spreading the plants they found most beneficial. If enough people planted food forests in an area, the local population could sustain themselves by hunting and foraging the way they did

before civilization.

So future generations are given the invaluable gift of autonomy from the industrial system, and the knowledge and incentive to resist industry's violent encroach on their way of life.

### **Personal Action Doesn't Happen in a Vacuum: Working Towards a Lasting Cultural Shift**

When a group of people chooses to, for example, go without cow products, there is less demand for cow products. Over that group's lifetime, less forest will be bulldozed to graze the cows that they didn't eat. Fewer cows will be impregnated by robotic rape machines. Fewer veal calves will be snatched from their mothers, put in dark little boxes for a few weeks and then slaughtered so the mother keeps producing milk for the dairy industry.

Some of the people who interact with vegans will be influenced by vegan ethics and ways of life and will be inspired to minimize their own harm to the ecosystem. They'll also adopt a vegan diet, and influence people in their lives to follow suit. One vegan becomes two, two become ten, ten become ten million. The cultural



shift spreads far and wide, touching countless lives and changing the course of history.

So in this way, an individual action gradually becomes a collective action. People slowly emulate others after being exposed to their lifestyle and ultimately the local culture is forever changed. All cultural shifts start out with a few innovators and gradually expand to the rest of the population as others see the benefits of the new culture.

Likewise with permaculture and food forests. People start planting food forests and others take up their example and pretty soon you have thousands of acres of land that are saved from desertification and become refuges for wildlife.

There are countless places where this is demonstrable, including where I'm from (somewhere in Western Asia). Each indigenous family in these mountains has a small plot of land that we cultivate. The more people choose to use mixed forest farming methods instead of standard sprayed monocultures, the more people are influenced to follow our example. They see how successful food forests are at feeding our families and the culture gradually shifts.

There needs to be a cultural shift that precedes and guides any revolutionary move-

ment otherwise you'll just end up replicating capitalism like Marxists have done time and time again. People who live destructive ecocidal consumerist lifestyles in exchange for fleeting material comforts won't be capable of shifting to ethical lifestyles just because "the revolution" happened. They'll simply replicate their destructive ways under the new political system and the revolution will have been for nothing. Capitalism will have just been given another paper mask to hide behind as it drags us deeper into the black hole of industrial apocalypse.

### **Fuck Your Luxury Space Communism**

A single cruise ship emits as much pollution as a million cars. Cruise ships dump 1 billion gallons of sewage into the ocean every year.<sup>5</sup> Knowing these facts, how can any anarchist decide to directly fund the cruise ship industry by saving up money and booking a cruise holiday?

Reds will tell you with a straight face that capitalism is to blame for the cruise industry's rampant polluting, and how, "after the revo-

5 "Friends of the Earth Cruise Ship Report Card 2014," [https://1bps6437gg8c169ioy1drtgz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/legacy/Cruise\\_Ship\\_Report\\_Card\\_2014.pdf](https://1bps6437gg8c169ioy1drtgz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/legacy/Cruise_Ship_Report_Card_2014.pdf)

lution,” the cruise industry will do no harm because it will be worker-managed.

In reality, a truly communist society would necessitate that cruises be free to every worker as a reward for their labor. This means far more globe-trotting tourists and far more cruise ships in the oceans. Carbon burning and pollution would actually increase greatly.

But let’s ignore that for now. We don’t live in a revolutionary communist society and we will not see capitalism go away in our lifetimes. Global capitalism is more ingrained in society than ever before. Anarcho-communists are such a tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny percentage of any population. Reds telling “lifestylists” to stop giving a shit about anything other than “overthrowing” capitalism, something we clearly don’t have the support or firepower to do, is blatantly ridiculous.

Continuing to eat industrial meat and processed foods, buying a new phone, games console, tablet every year, using disposable plastic bags, toilet paper, and/or chlorine cleaning products, building poorly-insulated over-sized concrete buildings, not composting your waste, salting the snow, heating a pool, planting a lawn, going on a cruise, etc. because “there’s no ethical consumption under capitalism” actively stands

in the way of positive change and directly promotes inaction and harm. It actively prevents the culture from shifting towards anarchy.

“We’ll go on this cruise now and help contribute to ecocide, but it’s okay because we’ll consume ethically after the glorious revolution” couldn’t be a more ridiculous standpoint, but it’s essentially what the “no ethical consumption under capitalism” slogan has been turned into. It’s a sad state of affairs when this empty rhetoric passes for revolutionary thought in red circles.

### **Ethics-Based Choices Aren’t “Liberal” Just Because Pompous Reds Say So**

Consumption under capitalism (or socialism) isn’t ethical, but that’s no excuse for inaction. There’s no global revolution coming to change the way we live overnight. History has shown us the impossibility of that notion—with countless revolutionary societies repeating all the mistakes of capitalist ones.

But we can have small local revolutionary action in the here and now that can lead the way to harm reduction at a wider level. Just ask the Zapatistas and similar indigenous and anti-civ anarchist movements around the world. No one is going to tell them to throw in the towel and

conform to globalist capitalist and communist industrial civilization because all consumption is somehow equal.

Anyone can make personal ethics-based choices and also organize collective action. I have no idea why so many collectivists see these pursuits as being mutually exclusive. But you'll be sorely disappointed if you thought a global collectivist revolution was something that was realistically attainable. The world is far too diverse to be molded into a uniform entity controlled by a 19th century ideology designed to serve European factory workers.

Ignore the sanctimonious blathering of boring ideologues. There's nothing wrong with living what you preach. You claim to oppose hierarchy? Then live your life dedicated to minimizing hierarchy wherever you can. Set an example. Face the beast head on and stand your ground until you breathe your last breath. Because what else are you going to do?

We live in the final days of the Holocene ecocide. Everything around us has gone up in flames because of civilization's insatiable greed, but that doesn't mean we should throw more gasoline onto those flames. We still have to live on this planet for a few more years before it all

burns up. It makes little sense for us to engage in activities that hasten our own suffering and make our communities even less habitable than they already are in these desperate end times.

Reds! Listen up, friends. Mocking people for caring about minimizing the harm they do and for thinking long and hard about the ethical implications of their actions doesn't make you somehow more radical than them. It just makes you a smug fuck. I don't care how many marches you've waved your shiny red flag at. Being able to recite the words of a long-dead white philosopher doesn't make you special, so shut up about "lifestylism" already.

When we see exploitation and engage in direct action to fight it, that doesn't make our fight useless. We have to live in this world and people are dying in it. All around us scores of people are suffering and dying. To ignore that and do nothing because our actions to relieve that suffering won't install communism to free the sacred workers from their bosses would be fucked.

There's likely no future for humanity, that's becomes apparent to anyone reading the horrifying science as it comes in. We've thrown ourselves off the cliff, and are just waiting for our bodies to hit the ground. While we fall, we

can choose to enjoy the breathtaking view of the mountains and the wind in our hair, or we can pull out a knife and repeatedly stab ourselves, so we feel nothing but excruciating pain in the moments before we reach the ground.

### **Capitalism and Communism Are Cut from the Same Exploitative Industrial Cloth**

The collectivists who see no problem with oppressive constructs like industrial meat consumption will immediately discount anti-authoritarian actions that aren't wholly-focused on abolishing the capitalist class and seizing the means of production. A lot of these red-anarchists are channeling Murray Bookchin as he delivered his anti-"lifestylism" screeds late in his life. They dream of seizing the means of production and thus receive a bigger share of the spoils, so it terrifies them that green anarchists instead want to set the factories and shopping malls on fire.

Reds see dumpster divers, illegalists, vegans, sustenance farmers, bike punks, squatters, naturists, communers and other so-called lifestylists as a so-called distraction from their driving singular desire to replace industrial capitalism with industrial communism. They

want to remove the bosses from the equation, but keep everything else almost exactly the same: workers, factories, battery farms, globalization, ecocide... even prisons and police in a lot of cases. They want everything industrial society has forced on the world, except this time, they swear it'll be more egalitarian with direct democracy, and an equal share of the industrial pie for every worker.

These red-dyed wannabe-industrialists insist we abandon our hard-fought battles and join them in pushing (waiting) for a more egalitarian industrialism that'll give us a fairer share of the profits gained from waging war on the wilds.

They love to accuse anarchist lifestyle-ists (green anarchists especially) of somehow conforming to the system... by struggling against it? Their pissy Bookchin-inspired rants accusing anti-civs of being in a "death cult" or of being "counter-revolutionary" (while they themselves embrace ecocide and mass-extinction) really makes no logical sense to me. Green anarchists like the water defenders in Canada right now are actively putting their lives on the line to fight against the march of industry, while these yuppie killjoys sit in their comfy suburban armchairs typing up walls of snark



to diminish the people who prove everyday that they live and breathe anarchy.

Sure, the Bookchinists, Chomskyists, and assorted anarcho-douchebags will show up at an orderly protest in their officially licensed Guy Fawkes masks, and they're always in the front row of their local union meeting, eager to read a deadly serious statement from a stack of printed A4s. But how does that give them the superiority complex to voice their disgust about edgy lifestylists? It should be obvious at this point that communism isn't going to save the world, yet they imagine themselves as the governors of righteousness.

Protesting is just another cog in the democracy machine: the illusion of choice. It accomplishes nothing. It certainly doesn't make you more revolutionary than an anarchist who makes the conscious choice to live as ethically as possible. People that think they've achieved something worthwhile because they've held up a pretty sign at some protest are fooling themselves. All they're doing is asking their rulers to be nicer rulers. Rulers aren't giving up their power because you made a sign. You're not better than "filthy lifestylists" because you quoted Kropotkin at your union meeting that one time.

Both protests and unions as well as 'lifestyle choices' have long been co-opted by the system and are not going to loosen the death-grip it has on the planet. The system has become quite adept at swallowing up all attempts at revolution and turning them into Bizarro-revolutions that can be whitewashed and monetized to further the system's growth. I don't need to remind anarchists that communism was instantly turned back into industrial capitalism every time it was attempted. The Communist Party of China is perhaps the most powerful upholder of capitalism in the world today, per capita, and it's the nation with the most billionaires.

### **Embracing Pointed Distractions and Recognizing Ideological Greenwashing**

Collectivists will often butt in when others are talking about methods of harm reduction and insist we stop talking about "pointless distractions" and instead focus on achieving their much-hyped global worker-society they promise will come if we just hold hands and march in the streets until everyone sees how awesome we are. Then the masses will all join us to overthrow the capitalists and install communist utopia, just wait and see!

A lot of reds will even claim that all discussion about ethics and social justice is elitist and classist “liberal posturing” aimed at dividing the working class. The worst of them will insist that class is the only issue we should be concerned with. To hell with feminism, post-colonialism, the environment, and all other distractions that don’t interest white male workers. Workerism and class reductionism are fond bedfellows.

Being a vegan or a dumpster diver or a forager or a squatter or a self-sufficient cave-dweller need not have anything to do with shaming other people. It’s simply the way someone chooses to live their life for a multitude of reasons; a lot of them informed by ethics, but also to pursue the happiness that every human desires.

An individual anarchist’s decision to live more ethically is not some kind of narcissistic circlejerk, the way collectivists like to present it. All anarchists have different motivations and different ethics. We all live in this world, in this time, and we can’t just pretend there’s some grand global homogeneous revolution right around the corner that’s going to save humanity from the rapidly approaching industrial apocalypse if only we chant loud enough and post more luxury space communism memes to

our Facebook profiles.

It's especially perplexing watching reds scorn anti-civs since none of these purported communist revolutionaries have demonstrated any real inclination to address the industrialist disaster that has been wrought on our planet beyond farcical promises of space-colonization, Star Trek replicators, and asteroid mining.

Even those rare reds who bother to give consideration to ecology in their theories continue to glorify civilization, industry and democracy as liberators. So-called social-ecologists, aka Bookchinites, promise that the planet can be saved if we just "make more democracy!" Then we can all participate in (that is, profit from) the industrial system with our voting power, and opt to use "ecological technologies" such as solar and wind energy to power the machines.

Never mind the Chinese sustenance farmers who have carcinogenic industrial waste dumped on their lands everyday from those solar panel factories; they're just not thinking ecologically enough.<sup>6</sup> And the Ghanaians who wince when mountains of worn-out solar panels are piled up

6 "China's Communist-Capitalist Ecological Apocalypse"  
<https://truthout.org/articles/china-s-communist-capitalist-ecological-apocalypse/>

in their backyards with the rest of the West's obsolete tech<sup>7</sup> are only impeding ecological progress with their divisive nitpicking! It's almost like they don't want Europeans to have two electric vehicles in every garage? So ridiculous!

When you give a majority group legitimized power over minorities, they always use it to oppress them. All power corrupts. Collectivism breeds hierarchy because the interests of the dominant group (e.g. factory workers) aren't the same as the interests of minority groups e.g. indigenous herders or queer folk or sex workers.

If you think your average meat-and-potatoes white male worker is going to suddenly become enlightened and compassionate towards the plight of minorities when you give him the power of direct democracy, as social ecologists and other red anarchists envision, you haven't been paying close attention to the world around you. Time and time again, voters have successfully used their vote to deny rights to migrants, sex workers, trans and gay people, and anyone they

7 "Agbogbloshie: the world's largest e-waste dump – in pictures" <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2014/feb/27/agbogbloshie-worlds-largest-e-waste-dump-in-pictures>

see as differing from their normative standards.

### **Understanding the Coercion Behind the “Collective Good”**

Reds expect you to put the needs of the almighty collective above your own needs, but the collective good matters little if your individual needs are ignored by the collective.

All too often, Western reds demanding you obey the collective good are simply engaging in red-washed white supremacy where the “collective” just means “white working men,” and the “good” just means “our profits.” Putting the will of the dominant population in society before your own needs and desires is an incredulous proposition. The profits of the white working man should not be of any concern to, for example, a brown, unemployed woman.

Collectivism is kind of a ludicrous concept if you really think about it. We can’t paint seven-billion people who have wildly different ideas of what life should be as one unified entity, because they’re *not* one unified entity. Collectivizing them as one group—“the working class”—makes no logical sense and does nothing but fuel the industrial wasteland rapidly decimating the entire globe. Why should all humans be seen as

workers, why should each of us be measured by our capacity to produce industrial goods?

People from different places have different needs. Marxism deals with this by separating people into classes and telling us to only concern ourselves with the worker classes and to hell with the peasant classes and the hunter-gatherers and the pastoralist nomads and the land-owner classes.

This land-owner class includes indigenous peoples living off of their ancestral lands and exploiting no one, but again and again socialists have targeted them for genocide for not fitting into their ideological framework. Then the imperialist socialists seize and commercialize their land for profit. For examples, see the Kazakh famine-genocide perpetrated by the USSR because the nomadic Kazakhs resisted forced collectivization,<sup>8</sup> or the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran and resulting famine that was orchestrated so the red Russians could take control of Iran's oil fields, or China's current ongoing land seizures across its territories and forced intern-

8 *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/sarah-cameron-famine-and-unimaginable-sorrow-in-soviet-kazakhstan/>

ment and “re-education” of a million Uighurs.<sup>9</sup>

The very idea of the worker class trumping everyone else is a proven recipe for colonialism and genocide. Individuals who avoid consumerism and live deliberately apart from the system aren’t exploiting anyone, but throughout history collectivists have caused untold death and suffering trying to shape indigenous lands into their image. Collectivism is far more dangerous than lifestylism to anyone who doesn’t toe the line of the collectivist’s ideological dogma.

Constructing a homogeneous group like a worker collective, and telling its members that they’re the only group that matters, the upholders of the holy revolution, and they need to purge anyone who would threaten their revolution by not falling in line with the red agenda, is not something that has ever led anywhere good. Forced collectivization gave us the Soviet Kazakh genocide, the Chinese Great Leap Forward genocide, the Soviet Holodomor genocide, etc. And it ultimately gave us collectivist capitalism like we see now in China—the most ecologically destructive form of capitalism there is.

9 “‘Deep concerns’ over UN official’s trip to China’s Xinjiang” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/concerns-official-trip-china-xinjiang-190615060808708.html>



Communism and other red ideologies (including the ones purporting to be anarchist) create as big an in-group/out-group divide as capitalism does. The power just shifts to the producers rather than the owners. And historically it's just as brutal in its treatment of the out-groups. Anyone who doesn't want to be part of the industrial system, like the Kazakh nomadic herders, is basically fucked. You dissent, you die.

The red ideologies view the entire world through a Western industrial worker-serf lens. But the whole world isn't organized like the industrial West and it's unfair to force Western values and economic systems on everyone.

Indigenous farmers in post-colonial places are treated as pariahs, kulaks, and massacred for having owned the ancestral land they sustain themselves with under capitalist definitions. Just because the poor in industrialized capitalist nations don't own the land they work, doesn't mean the poor in other parts of the world—where there is no lord-serf system in place—are bad.

A garden that you and your family and/or tribe tend to and depend on to survive is personal property, but communism has always

treated it like private property, as if growing your own food is reactionary and a threat to the revolutionary government. The USSR even banned people from planting gardens at home so they'd be forced to depend on the collective for food, which also served to keep them tied to the factory assembly line.<sup>10</sup>

Nomadic herders and roaming hunter-gatherers are likewise criminalized and starved out because there can be no room for people who don't submit to the industrial work system under communism. They're grouped as "individualists" and punished for resisting collectivization.

### **Reject Collectivism, Embrace Anarchy**

Collectivism, whether it be communist, fascist, or capitalist ideologically, isn't something that serves my interests as an indigenous subsistence farmer and forager living in these remote mountains. Whatever industrial dogma I'm ordered to live my life by only serves to fill my heart with sorrow. I will loudly reject the idea of a collective society at every opportunity, regardless of its ideological alliance. All industry kills all life.

10 Gregory, Paul R.; Stuart, Robert C. (1990). *Soviet Economic Structure and Performance*. New York: Harper Collins. pp. 294–5 and 114.

I'm an anarchist. Even the idea of a society governing my way of life makes me vomit a little. Your needs aren't my needs, I don't want to go where the collective wants to take me. My lifestyle and my ancestors' lifestyles are likely nothing like yours and we shouldn't be meshed together as a singular entity just because we're both forced to work the machines.

Setting up living, breathing alternatives to the industrial system crafts non-coercive relationships between humans, non-humans, and our environments, better than unionism and other workerist pursuits ever will. Workerism only further ingrains us in the system and increases our dependency on it, and if we do manage a revolution by some miracle... we just reproduce the capitalist system again because it's all we know. Working examples of anarchy like self-sufficient food forests are far more revolutionary to me than a union or a protest march. All applications of anarchy are important, but I most value anarchy that I can see and touch.

The only revolution I'm interested in is one that removes dependences on artificial structures. I want to be liberated from the system, not to become the system. The collective isn't my master. The collective is really just

another state, however nicely it's packaged.

Red anarchists—If you don't take responsibility for the harm you do, no one will. There's no rapture-like revolution coming to wipe out capitalism's sins and absolve you of any guilt for your part in it because "no ethical consumption." There's only this life you're living and your choices absolutely matter. They shape who you are and the impact you make on your environment and your culture. If you just keep doing harm and blame your actions on capitalism, your mentality is no different from that of a CEO dumping toxic waste in a river in China. Harm reduction in your community is something you have direct control over. You can choose to not dump that waste. Or you can dump it and justify it to yourself by saying "it's okay because capitalism did it."

The entire "no ethical consumption" argument and similar condescending slogans parroted by half-assed socialists are just a way to justify their inaction in the face of devastating oppression and ecocide.

It's become increasingly unlikely that we can stop the unraveling global mass extinction event that industry has wrought on the planet, but anarchists have never let impossible odds

stand in our way before. We fight because we exist and we exist to fight. Whatever the odds.

We can either choose to take action to resist the violent system starting on an individual and local level, or we can live and die waiting for capitalism to magically go away worldwide while participating in it fully and thus furthering its growth and increasing its violence.

“Think Globally, Act Locally” might be a cliché, but it’s really the only power we have. If we don’t take action in our own neighborhood in every way we can, why even pretend to care about anarchy?

Everything we do to resist the ecocide is worthwhile. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.

# Anarchy Vs. Archy: No Justified Authority—Or—Why Chomsky Is Wrong

## **Archy: The Opposite of Anarchy**

The dictionary definition of “archy” is any body of authoritative officials organized in nested ranks, be it a monarchy, an oligarchy, a republic, a feudal state, or any other hierarchical society.

Anarchy is the opposition to hierarchy and authority, while archy is the full embodiment of those things. While anarchy calls for the absence of rulers, archy thrives when a population serves and obeys rulers. Sometimes a few rulers (e.g. monarchies), and sometimes many (e.g. social democracies).

Hierarchies exist for rulers to maintain their social control and power over the population. This control is maintained with violent force by authorities appointed by the rulers: the army, national guard, police, courts, prisons, social workers, media, tax collectors, etc.

Not all guidance given by one person to another constitutes hierarchy. Choosing to accept a specialist's expertise in their craft needn't create a hierarchy or make them your ruler. A roofer laying your roof or a chef cooking your meal or a surgeon repairing your heart needn't be your superior in a hierarchy just by providing you with a valued service.

Similarly, an individual using force to strike a blow at the hierarchy that oppresses them does not turn that individual into an authority. Destroying archy where you see it does not create archy, it creates anarchy.

### **On "Justified Authority"**

Once you start justifying authority and hierarchy, you effectively twist a knife in anarchy. We've all heard the phrase "all power corrupts." It's not a meme; it's the entire reason anarchy exists as a practice.

Legitimizing authority enables archy.

Doesn't matter if you *call* yourself an anarchist while justifying hierarchies you personally approve of for whatever reason. NO authority is legitimate in anarchy. Yes, even in a parent-child relationship.

When you legitimize an authority, you're granting it power, presenting it as an institution that needs to be obeyed, and it won't stop there. It'll want more power because that's the nature of power: always grows, never stops to examine its devastating effect on its surroundings. Power is a license to do harm. Whether it was your original intention to enable a violent force when you legitimized an authority is irrelevant. It will do harm and the people who signed off on legitimizing it are (or should be) culpable for that harm.

Anarchy is opposition to authority. To pretend otherwise blatantly misrepresents what anarchy is.

### **Expertise vs. Force vs. Authority**

A lot of people confuse expertise for authority and then use that confusion to insist that anarchy doesn't oppose all authority. They say anarchy only opposes unjustified authority. They of course never explain who gets



to determine which authority is justified... I assume that determination is made by a further authority? An authority that is also justified? And which authority justified that authority..? It's silly when anarchists try to go down this justified-authority rabbithole.

A carpenter might be good at making cabinets, expert at it even, but that doesn't make them an authority. Their talent doesn't give them the right to assert authority, that is, power over anyone. Authority is not simply an isolated instance of a person using force. Authority is a distinct on-going social relationship between people. A coercive relationship that has been legitimized by our authoritarian hierarchical society. It's a relationship where authority figures assert power over less-powerful individuals in their care. These individuals are expected to submit to this mighty authority figure and obey their commands unwaveringly.

Imagine you're walking home at night and someone jumps out of the shadows and tries to stab you. In the resulting scuffle, you kill them in self-defense. This was a simple use of force; it does not make you an authority over the person who tried to kill you. This isolated action you took to preserve your own life does

not magically imbue you with the authority to go on a killing spree.

Similarly, when a child is about to walk in front of a speeding truck and you grab their hand to stop them, you're not using authority. You're using simple force. A temporary spur-of-the-moment action to preserve life is not authority. It doesn't give you ownership over the person you're protecting. Anarchy has no qualms with the isolated use of force, just the structural institution of authority.

### **The Chomsky Connection**

Noam Chomsky frequently uses the "saving a child from being hit by a car" example to explain his concept of "justified authority." The people that repeat the 'justified authority' fallacy are usually parroting Chomsky's ill-considered words. He says,

*Authority, unless justified, is inherently illegitimate and the burden of proof is on those in authority.*

He insists that a person's authority should be legitimized if justification is provided for it. But of course, he misses a step by neglecting to explain who gets granted the authority to judge that the authority figure's justification is

legitimate...

His definition of authority is inherently flawed. If he'd just say "force" instead of authority, there wouldn't be so many confused Chomsky-acolytes out there making arbitrary justifications for all kinds of hierarchical shit and then branding that shit "anarchist" when it's anything but. I've even seen his followers using his definitions to frame so-called "Night-watchman states" as being anarchist in nature. Night-watchman states are states that only exist to provide citizens with military, police, and courts. This is minarchism, not anarchism. The idea of anarchist states and anarchist prisons is deeply contradictory.

Even if we were to naively accept that minarchism were somehow desirable, it would only lead right back to full-scale statism. Legitimized power never remains still, and attempts to control its growth have forever proven futile.

Chomsky is never a good source for what anarchy means. He's made a career of watering down anarchy to better appeal to a white middle-class North American audience, even going as far as to state that government isn't inherently bad and that it can be somehow "reformed" with what he calls "real democracy" and "social control over investment." Far too

many anarchists look to Chomsky as an *authority* on anarchy, when he's clearly a minarchist.

He also likens anarchy to The Enlightenment and classical liberalism in his talks and writings, which is a very Western-centric thing to do, especially since The Enlightenment oversaw the divvying up of Africa by European imperialists and other acts of horrific racism and genocide. So it's probably not a good idea to associate anarchy with that authoritarian chapter of history. While it's true that the political movement that first branded itself as anarchism originated in Europe, anarchy thrived unnamed in every corner of the world before and after The Enlightenment, long before European philosophers began to pine for a return to it.

I don't consider Chomsky to be an anarchist (because he's demonstrably not one), so his definitions aren't that important to me. But unfortunately they're important to a lot of minarchists and liberals who call themselves anarchists, and they keep repeating his flawed definitions to newcomers, creating further confusion that reverberates for years.

### **The *Expertise* of the Cobbler**

The likely source for Chomsky's confusion

over the anarchist definition of authority is the originator of collectivist anarchism, Mikhail Bakunin. In his rough and unfinished text "What is Authority" (1870), he spoke of "the authority of the cobbler":

*Does it follow that I drive back every authority? The thought would never occur to me. When it is a question of boots, I refer the matter to the authority of the cobbler; when it is a question of houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or engineer. For each special area of knowledge I speak to the appropriate expert. But I allow neither the cobbler nor the architect nor the scientist to impose upon me. ... But I recognize no infallible authority, even in quite exceptional questions ... So there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination.*

"Voluntary authority and subordination" is essentially what every liberal insists they stand for. They claim capitalism is a voluntary contract between people. They say workers voluntarily choose to be subordinate to their bosses or the state in exchange for wages or security. Anarchists need to reject Bakunin's language

if we're to differentiate ourselves from these authoritarian ideologies and truly take a stand against authority.

Here Bakunin was trying to articulate the difference between expertise and authority, but he did it in a confusing and roundabout way that has enabled generations of minarchists to mistakenly identify as anarchists and promote a broken definition of anarchy. Expertise isn't hierarchical unless the expert is deliberately enshrined with authority. Being good at something doesn't give you the right to use your craft to rule people.

The guy made a flawed argument 150 years ago, when the European anarchist movement was still in its infancy and the terminology was still being developed. It was a small part of a rough draft that he never completed, and it is often quoted without any context by people who obviously haven't read the whole text or his associated writings from around the same time.

We obviously don't need to hold up everything every anarchist ever wrote as some kind of immovable anarchist canon. We don't cling to Bakunin's rampant antisemitism, so why cling to his half-baked bootmaker-fetish?

## **Diluting the Goals of Anarchy**

The oft-cited example of saving someone from being struck by a car has nothing to do with authority. It's a fundamental misrepresentation of the anarchist concept of authority, and I hope this piece will help shift the discourse away from it.

Every fucked up political ideology out there, from monarchy to neoliberalism to fascism, claims to be for justified authority and against unjustified authority. We know it's horseshit when liberals deem bombing school buses in Syria or Iraq a justifiable action to "protect freedom" or as "acceptable collateral damage," so why would we adopt their dangerous doublespeak definition of anarchy? As soon as you start making allowances for authority, you've stopped advocating for anarchy.

Pushing justified authority, as Chomsky keeps attempting to do, is a pointless exercise that only confuses the uninformed and gives us scores of middle-class baby-anarchists who come in with preconceptions that are counter to anarchy. They then use that misunderstanding to equate anarchy with all kinds of authoritarian shit, even including states. It makes the line

that separates liberalism from anarchy increasingly thin. And quite frankly, it breeds shit anarchists.

I'll finish this chapter by quoting an anarchist on a popular anarchist forum who is a perfect example of what I'm talking about:

*I feel it's necessary to have authorities that can perpetuate and protect certain things—for example, I think an unrevocable societal constitution that every autonomous community should follow is a good thing—and that there should also be codified laws—with the aim to protect individual liberty.*

*Resultantly, I feel like there should be authorities as there are now that ensure that those laws – such as the right to education to a good standard, or that housing or medical training or care should be of a certain standard, or the right to process through a justice system. Necessarily these authorities should have the ability to change situations where these laws/rights are breached. As an extension, I also find myself believing in a well-trained voluntary police force that can undertake these duties (though one of course that is as directly democratic as possible and revocable and responsible in the anarchist*



*tradition).*

*In this way I find myself drawn more to a desire for a “state” of federated anarchistic communities that function as an anarchist society might although within a greater framework of a limited system that wields authority.*

A constitution that everyone has to follow, a “democratic” police force, a state, a system that wields authority. None of this is any different than the liberal status quo. This person has no understanding of anarchy and yet feels the need to identify as an anarchist because they would prefer liberal society be more democratic..? It’s nonsensical. And yet the post was well-regarded by other “anarchists” who replied in agreement, with two of them even citing Rojava as an “anarchist state” that matched up to these stated ideals.

*An anarchist state. An anarchist state...*

## **Authority is a Moral Hierarchy**

A hierarchy is an artificial construct that depends on the principle of authority.

Authority is the socially-enforced rule that the ruler in a hierarchical relationship gives commands and the subordinate obeys under threat of (socially legitimized) violence.

If I offered my boss a meal, or saved them from drowning, I wouldn't be exercising authority over them; that action alone doesn't create a hierarchy. But just by being my boss, they are constantly exercising authority over me and I'm constantly their subordinate. I am ruled by them. I am constrained: controlled by the boss-worker hierarchy, by my boss's constant assertion of authority over me.

Authority is a deliberate social construct that divides people into either rulers or obeyers, using violence and the notion of "morality" to maintain this coercive system. Talking back to your boss, refusing their authority, that's a big moral no no. Society uses this coercive conditioning to uphold the oppressive dynamic and to keep you controlled and obedient. The system will not tolerate any real dissent against its law. Instead it conditions you to realign your perceptions until you finally accept its law as normal.

Proponents of free-market capitalism promote supposedly voluntary hierarchies (such as the relationship between owners and workers). This is merely an excuse for normalizing structural violence against the less powerful, a process legitimized by appealing to authority. These hierarchies aren't voluntary in any quan-

tifiable way, since we'd be punished by society in various ways if we chose to ignore them (say, by refusing to work or by killing our bosses and taking the true value of our labor). Justifiable hierarchy and authority is eerily similar to voluntary labor under capitalism.

Many are confused about the difference between morality and ethics proposed by post-left politics.

The moral person sees themselves as fighting a universal battle between good and evil. They are the righteous crusader for good; incapable of straying from the 'moral code' that enshrines them in sanctified goodness. The label "immoral" is applied to maintain a kind of superiority over an out-group and to thus justify any marginalisation of these undesirables.

The immoral can never be forgiven for their immorality because morality is definitive and final. They must be forever shunned by the righteous, so that the pious can maintain their purity.

Racial segregation was considered morally righteous in the US South, as was cleansing the land of savages during colonisation; lynching bi-racial children for impurity, denying women equality since it would lead to moral decay.

The recent government massacres of drug users in the Philippines were justified by creating a moral panic. The tyrant leading the massacres appointed himself as the one and only arbiter of virtue, to be blindly followed by all moral people.

Perhaps the most notorious moral panic of the last century was part of Mao's cultural revolution in China. His *Little Red Book* of quotes—a virtual moral blueprint—was used by the party-faithful to purge scores of random people for having morally-objectionable haircuts or fashion sense.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Stalin and his supporters in the USSR forced homosexuals into gulags where they were worked to death for “crimes against morality.”<sup>12</sup>

And of course the prototypical moral blueprint, the Christian bible, was used to lead brutal moral crusades across the world, involving mass slaughter, land seizures, and forced

11 “Torture, mass murder, rape, and cannibalism ... the horror of Mao's Cultural Revolution 50 years on”, Rod McPhee, *The Daily Mirror*, 20 May 2016: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/torture-mass-murder-rape-cannibalism-8017041>

12 “Gay in the Gulag,” Slava Mogutin, *Index on Censorship* (UK), Volume 24, No. 1/1995: <http://slavamogutin.com/gay-in-the-gulag/>

conversions of non-Christians.

Moral systems are designed to oppress and marginalise anyone deemed undesirable by the system. They are based on transcendent rules that are forcibly applied to all people from all backgrounds, in all situations; regardless of an individual's desires and values.

Unlike morals, ethics are decided on a case-by-case basis by individuals, based on their own values and desires. Ethics are tangible and tied to real cause and effect outcomes.

A moralist opposition to violence is that violence is universally wrong, immoral, bad.

On the other hand, an ethical opposition to violence can be made by an amoralist... They can see that in many cases violence begets more violence, fosters systems based on the dominance of the strong, and can lead to deep-seated multi-generational divisions. But in other cases, they could see violence as just. Because the alternative (e.g. fascism) would be worse.

A moralist forces their will on everyone else. Their morals are absolute. An amoralist isn't concerned with forcing their personal perspective on anyone, or with maintaining that perspective in every situation.

## **On Anarchist Parenting**

Authority is a structurally violent institution. It has nothing to do with the act of rendering aid to a child; feeding them or preventing them from falling into a pool and drowning. A parent-child relationship needn't be a hierarchy unless you go out of your way to construct it as such.

Parenting is only hierarchical when parents choose to force authority on their child. An anarchist parent treats the child as an autonomous individual and not as a subordinate to their authoritarian demands.

Anarchist parents see themselves as caretakers, not authorities. Legitimizing parental authority with the excuse of “justifiable hierarchy” is a scapegoat. It's not justified. Using violence to control children is not anarchy. Parents don't need to be tyrants to raise children.

Countless anarchist communities throughout history, including the modern-day Hadza in the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, have shown us that the parent-child relationship doesn't need to be the violent dictatorship it has become in capitalist-industrial society.

Yet a lot of anarcho-minarchists, for lack of a better term, insist on seeing the ownership that authoritarian society grants them over

their children as a “justified hierarchy”. It’s such an odd argument. If they’re okay with applying authoritarianism to their own children, they’d obviously be fine with using it to dominate strangers too. It’s baffling to see people claim that domination of children is compatible with anarchy just because it’s something they choose to engage in.

Civilized people make the mistake of constructing dangerous, unhealthy, and authoritarian environments for us to live in that completely ignore the burning desire every child has for freedom, play, exploration, and learning through first-hand experience.

We force children into metal carriages that take them to school-buildings where strangers are paid to dictate rigid lesson plans to them for years. Children spend their entire childhoods being moved from room to room, forcibly trained to function under the system as obedient civilized workers. Most children aren’t even allowed to play outdoors because the dangers of industrial civilization are so frightening to their parents.

Industrial civilization is simply unfit to nurture human life. The perverse ways we structure our societies around danger, authority,

fear, coercion, punishment, conformity, and obedience shouldn't be forced on children or anyone. As anarchists, we should be tearing down these authoritarian structures instead of making excuses to maintain them. Children don't need authority, they need anarchy.

### **Watered-Down Anarchy**

Certain people attach themselves to the flawed collectivist-anarchist definition of authority and then decide they can justify all sorts of hierarchies with it. That revisionism then enters the wider anarchist sphere and is seldom analyzed for its deficiencies since so many collectivist anarchists are really minarchists in disguise. Minarchists see no real problem with authority so long as it benefits them materially.

Sadly, these minarchists largely control the discourse in many anarchist spaces where the idea of true anarchy is simply unfathomable. Most people born and raised under authoritarian systems have tremendous trouble parting with the faux security blanket that a lifetime of archy has imbibed them with. The absurd idea of good hierarchy becomes normalized in these spaces and is used to keep anarchy from forming.

Anarchists need to make a strong distinc-



tion between the words authority, force, and expertise, so semantic misunderstandings don't lead to the suppression of anarchy.

“Justifiable authority” is one of several fundamental misunderstandings of anarchy that need to be thrown out before further diluting our (really very easily defined) objectives. We tend to overthink things and that leads to mountains of round-about revisionist theory that only detracts from anarchy and leaves people confused about what even our most basic objectives are.

Every genocidal dictator considered the hierarchies they upheld to be justifiable. Anarchists know better. Anarchy is, was, and always will be, the outright rejection of all archy.

When you compromise and make excuses to construct hierarchies, what you're doing is no longer anarchy.

# Anarchy vs. Communalism: Bookchin, Lifestylism, Ideology, and Greenwashing

## **Blasted Lifestylists!**

The father of communalism; Murray Bookchin, long identified as an anarchist but later in life penned scathing attacks against anarchists. He largely invented an imaginary schism between what he termed 'lifestylist' anarchists and socialists, denouncing 'lifestylists' as being beneath him.

Even though he eventually abandoned anarchism in favor of his communalist ideology, this elitist divide he created between "lifestyl-

ism” and socialism continues to reverberate today, with some social-anarchists even going as far as to distance themselves from the individualist aspects of anarchy that largely defined the movement from the beginning. This manufactured divide has greatly assisted in fragmenting anarchists into two opposing factions and led to needless infighting and distraction.

He lobbed the accusation of lifestylism against anarchists who live a life that, to them, embodies the spirit of anarchy but—in his view—does not work hard enough to achieve revolutionary social organization and the overthrow of capitalism. He also used it as an insult towards anarchists he saw as promoting what he termed “anti-rationalism.”

In reality, Bookchin was creating a false dichotomy; something he did often in his writings so he could then promote his patented solutions to problems that were often non-existent... Individualist anarchists are perfectly capable of both living anarchically in the current moment, as well as organizing for a future beyond capitalism.

A lot of the most successful anarchist movements in the world today stem from individualist tendencies. These movements are then

aided by the social-anarchist concept of prefiguration to create movements within the current system that replicate the conditions that would exist in an anarchist society. This allows the people exposed to these movements to see that anarchy works, and become comfortable with the idea of a post-capitalist world. Food Not Bombs is a great example of this.

Bookchin on anarchism:

*[Anarchism] represents in its authentic form a highly individualistic outlook that fosters a radically unfettered lifestyle, often as a substitute for mass action—is far better suited to articulate a Proudhonian single-family peasant and craft world than a modern urban and industrial environment. I myself once used this political label, but further thought has obliged me to conclude that, its often-refreshing aphorisms and insights notwithstanding, it is simply not a social theory.*

*Regrettably, the use of socialistic terms has often prevented anarchists from telling us or even understanding clearly what they are: individualists whose concepts of autonomy originate in a strong commitment to personal liberty rather than to*

*social freedom, or socialists committed to a structured, institutionalized, and responsible form of social organization.*

*In fact anarchism represents the most extreme formulation of liberalism's ideology of unfettered autonomy, culminating in a celebration of heroic acts of defiance of the state. Anarchism's mythos of self-regulation (auto nomos)—the radical assertion of the individual over or even against society and the personalistic absence of responsibility for the collective welfare—leads to a radical affirmation of the all-powerful will so central to Nietzsche's ideological peregrinations. Some self-professed anarchists have even denounced mass social action as futile and alien to their private concerns and made a fetish of what the Spanish anarchists called grupismo, a small-group mode of action that is highly personal rather than social.*

He penned this attack against anarchy late in his life while he was working to build communalism into his final legacy, perhaps hoping he would go down in history with Marx as the father of a powerful socialist ideology that could outlive him and impact the world for cen-

turies. He even warned that if his communalist ideology was not adopted by the world at large, it would result in the destruction of everything.

Equating anarchism with liberalism, when he spent years of his life identifying as an anarchist, is a rather shameless attempt at rewriting history in order to sell his new vanity project. It's a true shame that he ended his long history in radical politics on such a sour and self-defeating note.

### **Communalism: Murray's Prescribed Cure for Lifestylism**

Bookchin's politics evolved greatly throughout his life, starting with Stalinism and then Trotskyism in his youth, before finding anarcho-communism. In the 1970s, disillusioned with the authoritarian nature of the Leninism that dominated the worldwide socialist scene, he stated that he felt closer to free-market libertarians who, unlike the totalitarian Marxist-Leninists, will readily defend the rights of the individual. Later, he developed a series of interrelated ideologies: anarchist social ecology, post-scarcity anarchism, and libertarian municipalism. He increasingly spoke out against the innate individualism of the anarchist movement, and

finally broke with anarchism completely to form communalism. He was a professor and taught students his political theories.

This is a description of communalism in his own words (which manages to also disparage both anarchism and Marxism in the same breath, in true Bookchin fashion).

*The choice of the term Communalism to encompass the philosophical, historical, political, and organizational components of a socialism for the twenty-first century has not been a flippant one. The word originated in the Paris Commune of 1871, when the armed people of the French capital raised barricades not only to defend the city council of Paris and its administrative substructures but also to create a nationwide confederation of cities and towns to replace the republican nation-state.*

*Communalism as an ideology is not sullied by the individualism and the often explicit antirationalism of anarchism; nor does it carry the historical burden of Marxism's authoritarianism as embodied in Bolshevism. It does not focus on the factory as its principal social arena or on the industrial proletariat as its main historical agent;*

*and it does not reduce the free community of the future to a fanciful medieval village. Its most important goal is clearly spelled out in a conventional dictionary definition: Communalism, according to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, is “a theory or system of government in which virtually autonomous local communities are loosely bound in a federation.*

Communalism brings production and certain property under the control of municipal assemblies, which decide how property should be best distributed to meet the needs of the confederation.

While not being a state by the most common definition (since the political process is strictly localized), municipal assemblies could still be described as a form of hierarchical government. Communalism is a big step up over most other forms of government, attempting to curtail and decentralize the power structures we are governed by, but it's not anarchy.

Localized power structures are still very corruptible. They still create hierarchy. They can still grow out of control. Similarly to ancient Greece's democracy, communalism deliberately allows for majority rule (or democracy-by-



the-majority). This limitation should instantly disqualify it as being a form of anarchy, as voter-hierarchies can easily be exploited by authoritarians to exclude minority groups from the political process, and thus deny them the right to self determination. Any society that encourages the majority to force their will on a minority (thus creating a clear hierarchy) can't honestly be described as anarchist in nature. Bookchin reinforces this further,

*The anarcho-communist notion of a very loose 'federation of autonomous communes' is replaced with a confederation from which its components, functioning in a democratic manner through citizens' assemblies, may withdraw only with the approval of the confederation as a whole.*

So, according to Bookchin, a community that joins a confederation "may withdraw only with the approval of the confederation as a whole." This is probably the worst aspect of his majority-rule fetishization, as it locks entire communities into his system forever, whether those who didn't want the system like it or not. Any organization that forbids you from withdrawing from it is clearly at odds with libertarian ideals and the right to freedom of associa-

tion, so it's really dishonest of him to talk about libertarian municipalism when it's anything but.

*[Libertarian municipalism's goal is to] create in embryonic form the institutions that can give power to a people generally ... In short, it is through the municipality that people can reconstitute themselves from isolated monads into an innovative body politic and create an existentially vital, indeed protoplasmic civil life that has continuity and institutional form as well as civic content. I refer here to the block organizations, neighborhood assemblies, town meetings, civic confederations, and public arenas for discourse that go beyond such episodic, single issue demonstrations and campaigns, valuable as they may be to redress social injustices.*

Put into practice, I believe communalism can initially be a successful departure from the unwieldy nation-state monolith that plagues the world today and a reversion to the city-states that were once prevalent in ancient Greece at the dawn of civilization. Bookchin writes fondly of classical Athenian democracy, which he uses to glorify his romantic view of Western civilization.

But does simply returning to an earlier

state of civilization go far enough? Will an effective micro-state not morph back into a super-state as it grows and faces both internal and external pressures? Decentralization is admirable, but is it enough to successfully safeguard us from statism? And are Athenian democracy and Western civilization even things we want to reproduce, when both allow for the brutal oppression of minorities, were both built on slavery, and both institutionalized the denial of human rights to anyone not a member of the privileged class?

Bookchin's ideas for libertarian majority-rule democracy are deeply flawed and really can't be described as anything other than authoritarian.

*The minority must have patience and allow a majority decision to be put into practice...*

*Municipal minorities [must] defer to the majority wishes of participating communities.*

Any anarchist reading this should immediately be alarmed at the hierarchical implications it presents. White people putting their priorities ahead of black people, men forcing their will on women, Christians excluding Muslims, polluters shutting down environmentalists, heterosexuals subjugating homosexuals... Whichever voting

body has the highest numbers (or best propaganda) can effectively rule over the minority. It's almost as if Bookchin came full circle, returning to the Stalinism of his youth after his flirtation with individualism and anarchy.

While direct democracy is one of several decision-making mechanisms anarchists may utilize, communalism doesn't simply *allow* for direct democracy; it *requires* it, enshrining it in law. In making his case for direct democracy, Bookchin asserts that the only other option anarchists have at our disposal is consensus democracy. He then proceeds to brutally attack the consensus decision-making method, associating it with anarcho-primitivism (which he loathes, even equating it to Nazism) and deems it authoritarian. This allows him to offer an exact prescription to the so-called *problem* of multi-layered anarchist decision making in the form of his definitive, structured, ideology and its rules.

Organizational structures such as those communalism revolves around should be treated as a means, not an end. Basing an entire social system around a specific structured mode of organization that was designed to be implemented under the conditions present in the 1990s is restrictive and shortsighted.

Anarchy allows for communities to be adaptable to the conditions present in the place and time where the community exists. Rigid ideological structures should always be avoided as they rapidly become outmoded. Historically, communities revolving around political ideologies tend to become dogmatic, and as a result fail to adapt as conditions prove unfavorable to the demands of the ideology.

For instance: Marxism requires that a highly-advanced industrial economy be present before Marxist communism can be implemented. Most of the societies where Marxism was attempted lacked these conditions, and destructive policies were implemented in order to speed up industrialization (including mass-displacement of people)—eventually leading to the collapse of the societies and to ecological damage that will continue to be felt for millennia. As Marx had designed his economic model to function under specific conditions, Marxist leaders attempted to force their societies to fit a mold, with horrible consequences.

The unwillingness to sway from ideological dogma, however impractical the planned system proves in practice, has frequently led to disaster. So any political movement that

has strict guidelines for how society should be structured and governed has big weaknesses right out of the gate. Anarchy requires flexibility, because all forms of social planning can lead to unexpected hierarchies. The avoidance of hierarchies needs to be more important than sticking to a pre-written ideology if we are to pursue anarchy.

Dedicated ideologues often tarnish anarchy as being vague and lacking in exact instruction. I'd argue this is exactly why anarchy succeeds and manages to be so ageless: reinventing itself with every new generation of revolutionaries. Prescribing a one-size-fits-all solution to life is impractical in an ever-changing, multicultural world, especially one experiencing unprecedented worldwide social and ecological collapses. The greatest strength of anarchy is its flexibility. Anarchists have long laughed in the face of those who would have us live by their rigid rules.

### **A Green Anarchist Perspective**

Green anarchists like myself are often most critical of Bookchin's ideas because of his concept of post-scarcity, which, to anyone paying attention to the catastrophic mass extinction event we're in the midst of, is dangerously

idealistic. Resources don't cease to be scarce when socialism is adopted; the reality is that resources are dwindling all over the planet after centuries of over-extraction, including by socialist states. Once those resources run out, there's no getting them back, so an ideology that envisions a post-scarcity economy is intrinsically flawed.

Bookchin and other socialists imagine a society where regular people, rather than states, have the power to determine policy. And they imagine this society will somehow be spared the same destructive pitfalls of capitalist society. But there's no reason to assume that.

We have centuries of history showing us that people will not altruistically opt for policies that will put the ecosystem or minority groups (especially indigenous and immigrant groups) ahead of their immediate personal interests.

Just as people now vote for politicians loudly promoting disastrous environmental and social policies in order to safeguard their own privileges in society, history shows us they would continue to make damaging decisions if the system moved from representative democracy to direct democracy. To imagine that everyone in a society is capable of acting unselfishly

and putting other people and other lifeforms ahead of their own families is foolish; they will usually vote to protect their own immediate interests at the expense of everything else. That's how power works. It corrupts everything in its path absolutely; whether its wielded by a politician or a private citizen is irrelevant.

Bookchin saw technology as a mode of revolution, and promoted using technology in ecologically sustainable ways, but green anarchists are often critical of the technologies Bookchin envisioned. We see them as inherently isolating and hierarchical, a position Bookchin scoffs at.

One of the technologies he promoted was cybernation, which is essentially rule by machine. Tasks are assigned, decisions made, and resources distributed by computers, largely diminishing an individual's self-determination, replacing it with software algorithms. Like all software solutions, cybernation could be hijacked by malicious actors who seize control of the system to give themselves untold power. Cybernation is also vulnerable to the personal biases of the programmers who write the software. The programmers effectively govern the governor.

Bookchin often wrote enthusiastically about the revolutionary potential he saw in such



technologies.

*Bourgeois society, if it achieved nothing else, revolutionized the means of production on a scale unprecedented in history. This technological revolution, culminating in cybernation, has created the objective, quantitative basis for a world without class rule, exploitation, toil or material want. The means now exist for the development of the rounded man, the total man, freed of guilt and the workings of authoritarian modes of training, and given over to desire and the sensuous apprehension of the marvelous. It is now possible to conceive of man's future experience in terms of a coherent process in which the bifurcations of thought and activity, mind and sensuousness, discipline and spontaneity, individuality and community, man and nature, town and country, education and life, work and play are all resolved, harmonized, and organically wedded in a qualitatively new realm of freedom.*

Advanced technologies can forever alter the way we live our lives, detach us from our ecosystems and train us to seek fleeting relief from technologies, even as those technologies forever degrade and pollute the ecosystems we depend

on to survive. It's easy to ignore the damage industry does to our ecosystems when we can use the technology it produces to escape from the reality of our situation... at least until the ecosystems become so degraded that they can no longer sustain our lives and we're forced to look up from our digital sanctuaries to gasp for air.

Bookchin's emphasis on the modern urban city in his theories will give pause to anyone who has studied the history of civilization's disastrous effects on every ecosystem it comes into contact with. City life has always alienated us from the land, creating the depressing situation where most urban dwellers raised in vast concrete deserts have little respect for the natural world or desire to preserve it. When the repercussions of our actions towards the ecosystem are completely hidden from us, it's unlikely we'll change our behavior and act to preserve whatever ecological diversity the planet has left on the fringes of civilization's grim industrial wastelands.

A society structured around advanced technology can even create new elite classes of technologically-advanced people and exploited underclasses, whose lands are used to mine and manufacture the devices the technological class

grow dependent on. It's easy to see how this cycle can lead to devastating hierarchies.

Bookchin claimed technology and agriculture can be made sustainable with new advances, but years after his death, technology has progressed greatly, while the destruction to the planet caused by it has increased tenfold. The science is showing us that the damage industry has done to the world's ecosystems could very well lead to our own extinction in the near future.

Bookchin wrote,

*The development of giant factory complexes and the use of single- or dual-energy sources are responsible for atmospheric pollution. Only by developing smaller industrial units and diversifying energy sources by the extensive use of clean power (solar, wind, and water power) will it be possible to reduce industrial pollution. The means for this radical technological change are now at hand.*

*Technologists have developed miniaturized substitutes for large-scale industrial operation—small versatile machines and sophisticated methods for converting solar, wind, and water energy into power usable in industry and the home. These substitutes are often more productive and less wasteful than*

*the large-scale facilities that exist today.*

While it is true that some fuels can be less destructive than others, they still remain incredibly destructive, and by no means can they be sourced from a single ecosystem as Bookchin imagines in his writings.

The machines Bookchin speaks of are built using a large assortment of materials that need to be sourced from different ecosystems all over the world. The processes to extract the materials are destructive, the processes to transport the materials to the manufacturing plants and distribution points are destructive, and the waste products created during manufacturing are destructive. There are currently no viable solutions for any of these problems, and every new technology introduced to the market has instead created yet more inequality, warfare and environmental destruction; especially for the Global South that is exploited by the West for its natural resources and cheap (or slave) labor.

Solar panels and wind turbines depend on dirty mining for the minerals needed for their construction, and massive energy use (usually coal) during manufacturing. Mining the quartz that solar panels are made from causes the lung disease silicosis in the impoverished

miners. Then, once the quartz is transported to the factories, the manufacturing process creates vats of toxic waste (silicon tetrachloride) that is disposed of in random fields near the factories in China, contaminating soil and water, and making entire rural populations sick.

From "China's Communist-Capitalist Ecological Apocalypse" by Richard Smith, *Real-World Economics Review* no. 71,

*When exposed to humid air, silicon tetrachloride turns into acids and poisonous hydrogen chloride gas, which can make people dizzy and cause breathing difficulties. Ren Bingyan, a professor of material sciences at Hebei Industrial University, contacted by the Post, told the paper that "the land where you dump or bury it will be infertile. No grass or trees will grow in its place... It is... poisonous, it is polluting. Human beings can never touch it." When the dumping began, crops wilted from the white dust, which sometimes rose in clouds several feet off the ground and spread over the fields as the liquid dried. Village farmers began to faint and became ill. And at night, villagers said "the factory's chimneys released a loud whoosh of acrid air that stung their eyes and made it hard to breath."*

Solar panel, wind turbine, and battery production fuels colonialism, slavery, war, hunger, fossil fuel burning, and ecocide. Calling these energies “green” is really a bold-faced lie and just the latest example of industrialism giving itself a skin-deep makeover that will quickly fall apart when the evidence piles too high for the media to ignore. By promoting these destructive industries, Bookchin aids their shameless greenwashing.

Bookchin:

*The absolute negation of the centralized economy is regional ecotechnology—a situation in which the instruments of production are molded to the resources of an ecosystem.*

The idea that rapidly advancing technologies can be distributed equally among billions of people (necessary if we care at all about preventing the formation of hierarchies and inequality), or that all people would even want their lives to be governed by these technologies, is naive at best, or, at worst, a malicious falsehood aimed at selling books and “Institute for Social Ecology” certificates.

Bookchin’s insistence that industry is only destructive because of capitalism, and would be liberating under (decentralized) socialism has no

basis in reality, as the technologies he romanticizes remain destructive to the environment and are hierarchy-forming regardless of the social system in place. They also require resources that simply cannot be sourced from a single locale. This fact alone greatly diminishes his theory.

Bookchin:

*The new declasses of the twentieth century are being created as a result of the bankruptcy of all social forms based on toil. They are the end products of the process of propertied society itself and of the social problems of material survival. In the era when technological advances and cybernation have brought into question the exploitation of man by man, toil, and material want in any form whatever, the cry "Black is beautiful" or "Make love, not war" marks the transformation of the traditional demand for survival into a historically new demand for life.*

Bookchin's plans for localized, ecologically-sound, self-supporting, automated micro-industries unfortunately remain a pipe dream; vaporware if you will. In the 21st century, as the Earth's ecosystems collapse all around us under the strain of industrial exploitation, as forests burn, lands flood, and countless species

of plants and animals go extinct forever, his vision of distributing industrial technology equally and freely to everyone on the planet becomes less and less relevant to our reality. These ideas aren't something to base a political movement for lasting social change on, on a planet being rapidly exterminated by industry.

Bookchin eventually broke with anarchism completely when he finalized the guidelines of his communalist ideology. Today a lot of his more practical ideas have been implemented by the celebrated Rojava community in western Kurdistan, which has had mixed results in achieving his vision.

His attacks on individualist anarchists (especially of the anti-civ flavor), have provided decades of fuel for collectivist anarchist ideologues to villainize and purge non-collectivists from anarchist spaces. A lot of these collectivists soon follow in Bookchin's footsteps and abandon anarchy altogether, in favor of various structured ideologies including Marxism-Leninism, transhumanism, and communalism.





# Do Anarchists Vote in State Elections?

It obviously depends on the individual anarchist whether or not they choose to participate in the political process, but I'm writing this piece to point out that the act of voting in state elections directly contradicts anarchy. If an anarchist chooses to vote, that action has nothing to do with furthering anarchy or anarchist principles. No anarchist worth their salt would pressure other anarchists into voting, not even for their favorite politician.

I'm always staggered by the absurdity of anarchists stumping for politicians. Every time election season is approaching, certain self-proclaimed anarchists flood anarchist spaces on social media to shame us into voting. They always make dramatic moralist claims like "If you don't vote for this politician, their opponent will put my life

in danger. If you don't support this progressive ruler, you obviously don't care about (insert marginalized group) and are no comrade of mine!"

Voting for a political candidate in a representative democracy is a direct legitimization of their authority—over you and everyone in your community. It's inviting them to rule you. By voting, you're declaring your support for the system and appointing a politician to act as your political representative for however many years their term lasts. That politician now speaks for you, makes your decisions for you, acts in your name.

By supporting a politician, you're declaring your approval for whatever actions that ruler then takes during their reign in power. The more power the position has, the more harm they'll be able to do. If you're voting for a president of a nation state, for example, you can bet they'll make decisions that will cause death and suffering for countless people.

There is no way to vote for change under capitalism. The system in a neoliberal capitalist state only exists to serve the elite wealthy classes, to enable them to hoard more and more wealth by exploiting your labor, and to protect that wealth from you. Socialists who think

they can reform the state from within are not anarchists, even if they claim to be. A lot of democratic socialists claim to be anarchists to get you to support their candidate. They'll insist lots of anarchists have joined their organization. They'll sometimes even claim their candidate will fight for anarchy if they get elected.

Democratic socialists accept the state as a legitimate vector for change and believe it can be made to work for the people if we just elect the right sort of politicians; typically so-called progressive liberals who support some friendlier policies and promise to use their power for social justice.

Anarchists, on the other hand, reject all authority as illegitimate and don't accept being ruled by anyone; no matter how progressive the prospective ruler is or professes to be. Anyone telling you they're an anarchist while trying to get you to choose a better ruler, or a lesser evil, is either lying to you or to themselves.

Putting nicer liberals in positions of power might seem like a good idea on first inspection, but it ignores the simple reality that all power corrupts. All throughout history, no system of rulers and obeyers has made us freer. Every single power hierarchy has rapidly descended into

tyranny. Giving a person power and expecting them to not use it to cement even more power for themselves is as foolish as Charlie Brown trying to kick the football while Lucy holds it. Power is an addictive drug and people who possess it can no longer be trusted to serve your interests when those interests now contradict with their own. The powerful have very little in common with the powerless.

Trying to fix hierarchies so they appear, on the surface, to be less brutally unjust, can actually hurt anarchy, because it convinces radicals to compromise, settle for, and grow complacent, accepting a supposedly kinder ruler.

How this typically plays out...

The ruler the radicals helped elect is quickly corrupted by the system that has granted them so much power that their ego is in overdrive. As the “voice of the people,” the ruler is convinced they can do no wrong and that their actions are in service of the greater good or the revolution.

The people who promoted and voted for the ruler, after eagerly celebrating their success, will spend the next several years working hard to justify to their own egos the increasingly horrible things the ruler then inevitably does while in office.

They'll now spend their energy smugly explaining to everyone who will listen that the ruler's oppressive actions are ultimately in their best interests, that the ruler is simply thinking ahead, playing 3D chess, that compromises have to be made to aid the revolution, that reform takes time, that they can't be expected to not take money from lobbyists or deport migrants or imprison poor people or wage war overseas because "that's how the system works." They have to work within the confines of the system now, so they are able to one day do good, once they have enough money and power to accomplish it!

The progressive politician will soon be indistinguishable from every other politician shilling their way up the hierarchy, and their radical supporters will have abandoned every radical inclination they ever had to justify supporting their team. Empty revolutionary rhetoric will have replaced anarchist methods like direct action and mutual aid, and words like "socialism," "progressive," and "revolution" that were used in the political campaign will have been stripped of all their value and meaning, convincing everyone that socialism is just more of the same and not worth fighting for in the future.

The wonderful thing is, the people who

stumped so fervently; shaming everyone into voting for their shiny new ruler, will never have to accept any culpability for their part in bringing the ruler to power. The whole point of democracy is to shift responsibility from the individual to the intangible and indomitable system. The institutions of democracy work hard to convince individuals that they have no right to self-determination beyond casting a vote for the system's pre-approved ruler A, or pre-approved ruler B.

See, only the system can provide for you, citizen. Trust in the system. The system is great. Don't fight the system. You can't defeat the system. Just ask the system for freedom and maybe you'll be granted some—if the system is feeling generous anyway. Vote for ruler B today!

Anarchists! Pull yourselves together. Capitalism and statism simply cannot be voted away. As Emma Goldman famously said, "If voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal."

# Do Anarchists Support Free Speech?

From Wikipedia,

*Doublespeak is language that deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. Doublespeak may take the form of euphemisms (e.g. “downsizing” for layoffs, “servicing the target” for bombing), in which case it is primarily meant to make the truth sound more palatable. It may also refer to intentional ambiguity in language or to actual inversions of meaning. In all cases, doublespeak disguises truth.*

The concept of free speech is fundamentally flawed, and has historically been used to convince citizens that they have rights that are gifted to them by the supposedly benevolent



and generous state.

In reality, the state doesn't give you rights; it controls them, limits them, keeps them from you.

When an authority grants you free speech, what they've really done is take away your freedom to speak, and then allow certain people (typically the favored social class) to say certain things under certain conditions. There's nothing free about this. You're still forbidden from speech that would threaten the state or those it empowers. You're still legally viable for slanderous powerful people who can afford as many lawyers as it takes to sue you into bankruptcy. You're still beaten to a bloody pulp for talking back to a cop. You'll still be imprisoned, enslaved, and murdered by the state and its enforcers for being the wrong race or the wrong gender or the wrong sexuality or the wrong religion or the wrong class and daring to resist your oppressors.

Free speech is a lie told to us by our rulers to convince us we need to be ruled by them.

Anarchists are aware enough to realize the state does not grant us any kind of freedom. The entire existence of the state is predicated on taking freedom away from us to empower

the rich and powerful minority that the state exists to serve.

So as anarchists, as people who don't want to be ruled, people who see the blatant lies our rulers tell us for what they are, it would make little sense for us to support such an inherently Orwellian concept as free speech. A much more honest word for this concept would be "controlled speech" or "state-approved speech."



# Do Anarchists Support Democracy?

## Understanding Democracy

The word “democracy” comes from two Greek words:

- demo- a combining form occurring in loan-words from Greek, where it meant “people.”
- cracy: a combining form occurring in loan-words from Greek, with the meaning “rule,” “government,” “governing body.”

So democracy literally means: “Rule by the people.”

In my mind, anyone who aims for us to be ruled, even by “the people” (as abstract and meaningless as that concept is) is not promoting anarchy. But unfortunately this view is not always shared by the people calling themselves anarchists today.

It's difficult for me to imagine that an anarchist; who is presumably opposed to authority in all its guises and, one hopes, rejects the very notion of rulers, would then consent to being ruled by "the people"... I know I sure as hell don't want to be ruled by anyone. But a lot of anarchists continue to romanticize demo-crazy, perhaps because they're unable to break through the years of propaganda fed to them by the state and its schooling and media apparatuses.

From an early age, it's hammered into us that democracy = freedom. Any anarchist will tell you that although most of us live in societies that are governed by forms of democracy, none of us have anything resembling freedom. Yet a lot of us make excuses to ourselves so we can continue to romanticize democracy.

Tell a room full of anarchists that you oppose democracy and you'll no doubt hear impassioned insistence that what we have now isn't real democracy, that "if we had anarchism, we'd have real democracy and things would be different, because anarchism is the only real democracy!"

A lot of anarchists spend a lot of effort holding onto oppressive phantoms like democracy and go to great lengths to fuse these lib-

eral concepts with anarchy, when we really have no reason to. Anarchists who insist anarchy and democracy are one and the same—when democracy is responsible for an endless list of horrible atrocities—do no service to anarchy.

Our rulers use democracy to separate us into in-groups and out-groups, pitting majority group against minority groups and giving everyone a false sense of control. We're made to believe we have a say in how our lives are run because we get to participate in glorious democracy. Of course, all of us outside the ruling class continue to be exploited and live in perpetual servitude, while the only people who really benefit from democracy are the ruling class who use it to keep us alienated and distracted so we don't rise up and kill them all for the debilitating misery they create.

Anarchy rejects authority and it rejects the domination of majority groups over minority groups. Anarchy is about upholding each individual's autonomy and dismantling the authority forced on us by oppressive actors.

Democracy grants authority to favored groups to oppress minority groups. Democracy ignores the autonomy of the individual in favor of the collective will of the dominant group.

Democracy exists to enable rulers to uphold brutal power hierarchies. It's really the full embodiment of authority; used to maintain the tyrannical capitalist-statist status quo all over the world today.

## **Democratic Genocide**

Democracy is the tyranny of the majority, however you try to window-dress it. In practice, all forms of democracy have been used by a majority group to control or otherwise dictate to a minority group. All forms of democracy have been used to smother autonomy, to stifle self-determination, and to absolve rulers of responsibility for their actions. How can a ruler be responsible for their atrocities when The People elected them and empowered them to commit those atrocities?

Though you'll never hear democracy-fetishists mention it, Hitler was democratically elected. His actions after being elected were largely supported by the majority group in Germany. All the atrocities he committed were done on behalf of that majority group, to strengthen the position of "Aryan" Christians in society at the expense of everyone else. The German people empowered Hitler to maintain

their privilege at all cost.

There's no reason so-called real democracy would be any different from the democracy that created nazi Germany. Participatory democracy would just allow more members of the dominant group to more directly participate in enacting brutal policies.

Real democracy won't stop people from choosing to oppress others to benefit their own group. If the majority of WW2 Germans stood by and cheered while people were carted off to concentration camps, why would anyone think real democracy would have changed that? Throughout history, whenever a skilled propagandist points the finger at a minority group, the majority group tears them limb from limb. This is democracy in action.

### **Democracy or Anarchy?**

So do anarchists support democracy? Not if those anarchists have a developed understanding of what anarchy entails. Not if they're serious about liberating themselves from authority and crushing hierarchies as they form.

Democracy is really not compatible with anarchy. It could be a useful process for gauging the views of each member of a small group, but that



shouldn't be enough for us to make the claim that "anarchy is democratic." Anarchy is the opposition to authority. It's the struggle against oppression, the quest to limit suffering. We shouldn't be claiming anarchy is defined by democracy; which is a specific system of government that demands people be ruled by other people.

If you ask ten random anarchists whether they support democracy, you're certain to get a mixed response. Every person you ask will be at a different point on their political journey, and some anarchists will spend a lot more time thinking about labor rights, housing, immigrant aid, and other immediate concerns, while putting very little philosophical thought into the nature of hierarchy and all the ways it manifests itself and becomes ingrained in our lives.

Collectivist-minded anarchists will usually insist on direct democracy and consensus democracy as decision-making mechanisms, but it frequently leads to problems when certain members of the group don't fall in line with the majority's agenda. The bigger the group, the more likely this is to happen. The minority members will inevitably grow frustrated at this oppression and either leave the group or be forced to conform in order to stay.

In practical terms, for example, this could mean all black people in a community could be alienated, marginalized, or even forced to leave their homes altogether because the white majority have voted to ignore their concerns in order to safeguard white privilege. Democracy and marginalization kind of come as a group deal. “Power to the people” really means “power to the most powerful group of people,” and the more power the powerful group has, the less power the marginalized groups have.

### **The Authority of Democracy**

Western democracy originated in ancient Greece. This political system granted democratic citizenship to free men, while excluding slaves, foreigners and women from political participation. In virtually all democratic governments throughout ancient and modern history, this was what democracy meant. An elite class of free men made all the decisions for everyone. Before Athens adopted democracy, aristocrats ruled society, so “rule by the people”, or the idea of a government controlled (in theory) by all its (free) male citizens instead of a few wealthy families seemed like a good deal. But really it was just a new iteration of Aristocracy rule rather than

the revolution it's painted as. The rich still rule society by feeding voters carefully constructed propaganda and keeping everyone poor, over-worked and desperate to be granted basic needs by the state.

In democracies today, only legal citizens of a country can participate. In a lot of countries, people who have been convicted of a crime are denied the right to vote, regardless of how long ago they served their sentence. In the US, this is used to deny voting rights to minority groups, who make up a large proportion of the prison population.

In some societies only a small minority are allowed to participate in the democracy. In Apartheid South Africa, the minority group (European settlers) granted themselves democracy and excluded the native majority, using democracy to deprive the native population of the rights granted to European settlers.

Anarchy, of course, is an absence of government, of rulers. Democracy aims for the individual to be governed, ruled, controlled by others. So it's plain to see that anarchy is fundamentally incompatible with democracy.

There has been a lot written outlining why the concept of democracy simply cannot

be made compatible with anarchy, yet a lot of people identifying as anarchists today refuse to let go of the idea of democracy as a revolutionary method, and insist it can somehow overcome its inherently hierarchical nature and long history of oppression. In all honesty, a lot of these people are simply confused minarchists who don't actually want to abolish hierarchy but instead minimize it.

### **Consensus Democracy?**

Consensus democracy aims to get everyone in a group to agree to a unified path of action. It sounds good in theory, but the only way to get everyone from disparate backgrounds and experiences to agree to the same thing is to water down the plan to such an extent that the action becomes meaningless.

Consensus democracy assumes that majority groups won't bully or peer pressure minority groups into folding to their will. It ignores the basic reality that some people will aggressively force their will on others, or at least shame or manipulate opponents into submission.

The whole concept of consensus democracy reminds me of that meme with the smug guy sitting at the booth with the "change my

mind” sign, inviting his political opponents to debate him. If I saw that guy sitting at that booth, I’d walk the other way. Why should anyone be forced to expend all their energy to change someone’s mind? Just do your own thing and don’t worry about people who don’t want to participate in what you’re doing. If people have fundamental disagreements, then they don’t need to cooperate. It’s not the end of the world.

Attempts to get everyone to reach the same agreement is just the latest form of the bureaucratic meandering that has long sabotaged political action. After countless hours of heated debate, and a long series of compromises, the consensus reached (if it’s ever reached at all) will likely be very watered down from its initial form and be of little benefit to anyone in the group. A plan for concrete action will have been turned into a frustrating exercise in concession, tepid half-measures, and ultimately; inaction. All because the people who made the plan felt they couldn’t pursue it without the approval of a committee of naysayers.

### **Anarchy Doesn’t Need Democracy**

Instead of a large group laboring to make

democracy work so they can agree on a course of action, it is far more productive for smaller groups of people with shared interests to splinter off and co-operate for their own plans, requiring no compromise because their interests are already aligned.

Throughout history, democracy has existed to legitimize authority, providing justification for hierarchical power structures by framing every oppressive action the state takes against us as “the will of the people.” It has long enabled the powerful to crush the powerless. People who insist on associating anarchism with democracy are trying to legitimize anarchism, to associate it with comfortable institutions embraced by thoroughly-indoctrinated liberals. But anarchy has no want or need for legitimization. Anarchy doesn’t need to be watered down to broaden its appeal to a public that is high on hierarchy.

Anarchists always oppose monarchy: the rule of one. We always oppose oligarchy: the rule of a few. So why wouldn’t we oppose democracy: the rule of many? Why should the many get to decide how you or I live our lives? A ruler is a ruler is a ruler.

Democracy has been expertly wielded as

a weapon by the elites in society. By combining democracy with meticulously-crafted propaganda, the powerful control voters and manipulate them into voting against their own interests.

It has forever been synonymous with class-based societies. It has split entire countries into two barely-distinctive political parties (conservative and progressive) that are married in their opposition. Even in its most libertarian-friendly forms, it has constantly failed to avert hierarchy, coercion, and the authoritarian machinations of majority-groups.

You can't strive to replace an artificial system as brutally hierarchical as democracy with a supposedly more egalitarian version of the same thing and call it anarchy. You have to throw the whole rotten system out.

Reject democracy. Reject the notion that you should be ruled by anyone. Embrace self-determination. Embrace anarchy.

# Tankies and the Left-Unity Scam

## What is a “Tankie”?

A tankie is anyone who defends authoritarian state-capitalist dictators and the atrocities they’ve committed and continue to commit.

The term was originally coined when the USSR sent Russian T54 tanks into Budapest, Hungary, on the 4th of November, 1956, to suppress a worker uprising. Factories had been taken over nationally by workers councils, in a demonstration of worker self organization that was at odds with the Soviet’s imperialist rule. The Soviet troops eventually suppressed the uprising. Then the USSR sent tanks in to invade Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Afghanistan in 1979. A decade later, in 1989, tanks were similarly used by another state-capitalist regime to crush student dissidents in Tiananmen Square in China.



Anarchists use the word “tankie” to describe any supporter of authoritarian regimes who claims to be socialist. “Red fascist” is another popular term used in this context. The exception is Hitler’s “national socialists,” who are referred to simply as fascists. Like Lenin and Stalin, Hitler initially represented himself as a socialist, realizing that appropriating socialism would be useful to gain popular support. Of course, his genocidal actions had nothing to do with establishing socialism, and his so-called “national socialist” ideology was just another form of collectivist capitalism.

It’s worth noting that the USSR signed a treaty with Nazi Germany that divvied up much of Europe between the two powers. The Soviets then annexed the countries granted to them by the nazis, drafted their citizens into their Red Army, burned villages full of women and children to the ground, deported scores of people to prison camps, and then massacred them.

The definition of fascism from Unionpedia.org:

*Fascism is a form of radical authoritarian ultranationalism, characterized by dictatorial power, forcible suppression of opposition and control of industry and commerce.*

The close similarities between fascism and Marxist-Leninist ideology are hard to ignore. All four of these features apply to both ideologies. Both Marxist-Leninism and National Socialism masquerade as socialism but in reality have little to do with it and are simply excuses to mount dictatorships, control the local populace, invade foreign lands, and stamp out all dissent.

Tankies are people who make excuses to justify the atrocities committed in the name of communism. Tankies crave power and work to create rigid hierarchies to amass that power. They support a totalitarian one-party state that governs all of society with an iron fist. They defend forced labor, polluting mass-industry, population displacement, mass surveillance, genocide, and brutal punishment for anyone who speaks out against the state or the new ruling class.

They support modern China's blatant racism and nationalism as they attempt to violently force muslims to abandon their culture in favor Han Chinese culture using "re-education" camps and family separation policies.

*The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why it Matters* is a 2010 book by Brian Reynolds Myers. Based on a study of the propaganda produced in North Korea for inter-

nal consumption, Myers argues that the guiding ideology of North Korea is a race-based nationalism that spawns from Japanese fascism, rather than any kind of Communist ideology.

The book describes how the North Korean government is insular, xenophobic and militaristic. It details a mob attack on Black Cuban diplomats by North Koreans, and the forcing of North Korean women to abort mixed-ethnicity children. This racism is deeply ingrained in North Korean society and promoted by the state's own propaganda.

Since the 2009 North Korean constitution omits all mention of Communism, Myers argues that Juche is not actually the ideology of the North Korea state. He postulates that it was designed to trick foreigners, especially tankies, into supporting the fascist state. And support it they do, wholeheartedly, despite all the glaring signs that it's a perverse merger between fascism and monarchy. They'll even accuse you of being racist for not supporting that racist state.

They make the same claim to anyone who is critical of modern China's extreme-capitalist state, accusing them of "Sinophobia", despite the fact that the criticisms from anarchists are almost always about China's institutional per-

secution of ethnic minorities and their overseas imperialism.

Only a tankie could accuse someone with legitimate concerns about billionaire ruler Xi Jinping's racist (and homophobic) policies of somehow being racist against the Han Chinese people for voicing those concerns. There's no logic whatsoever to tankie claims that anyone who *criticises* a racist, homophobic dictator of an ethno-state is *being* racist, or that talking about China's imperialism means you're somehow an imperialist being paid by the CIA to discredit communism.

Tankies often defend these state-capitalist regimes by claiming they are "anti-imperialist" states; as they are in fierce competition with free-market capitalist regimes such as the USA. Tankies somehow fail to recognize that state-capitalist imperialism is virtually identical to free-market capitalist imperialism. They take the side of imperialist empires like the USSR or China, and modern-day Russia, in geo-political conflicts simply because they oppose the USA. They fail to realize that there's nothing revolutionary about favoring one empire over another.

Another common argument they make is that the atrocities committed by their idols were

necessary to affect the rapid industrialization of their nations. Marx theorized that the way to communism was through a modern industrialized economy. His theories were written with industrial capitalist states like Germany and the UK in mind, to transition them into socialist states, and then finally onto communism.

This presented a problem for Russia, China, and other undeveloped nations, who had very little industry to speak of, and simple, agrarian economies. Stalin and Mao both decided that the solution was to rapidly industrialize of their territories, forcing mass population transfers from rural areas into cities where the former peasant-class had to work in the state's factories, creating the worker-class that Marx wrote his theories for. Of course these brutal social upheavals created numerous problems, including millions of deaths and rampant environmental destruction.

Tankies praise these genocidal population transfers because they "lifted the peasants (who survived) out of poverty." But they measure poverty by materialistic, capitalist standards that are simply of no use to the subsistence farmers, hunter-gatherers, and nomadic herders who made up much of the pre-industrial world.

Before Lenin, Stalin, and Mao's collec-

tivization and industrialization, most peasants were largely self sufficient. Even those living in feudal territories, while by no means free, lived simple uncomplicated lives in harmony with nature; having no carbon footprint to speak of since industry was non-existent. Most enjoyed relative autonomy from the state (which had a far shorter reach), practiced mutual aid with their neighbors, and only needed to work a few hours a week<sup>13</sup> to produce all the food they needed to survive. The progression of Lenin's state capitalism quickly changed all this, and they now had to labor endlessly in grungy, polluted cities or on industrial battery-farms for the state or face being branded a "kulak" and exiled, imprisoned, or killed. As bad as feudalism was, it didn't have the concentrated, centralized power that state capitalism exerted on every single person within its borders.

There was no escaping the state now. You couldn't retreat to the mountains to get away from the ruler as countless bandits did before because the new ruler was everywhere. Indigenous people were no longer permitted to maintain their way of life because it interfered

13 James E. Thorold Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949), pages 542-43.

with the state's demands for complete worker homogenization. State capitalism made life much harder for anyone who desired self-determination, simply because it was impossible to evade this new form of superpowered-state. Anyone resisting the state's rule was crushed.

Stalin's "continuous working week"<sup>14</sup> was designed for maximum worker productivity, allowing workers scant time to recover from the daily grind of the industrial machine. Citizens were forced to work in cramped, unsanitary factories far from their former homes to meet Stalin's industrial quotas. This was an incredibly difficult transition for people that had lived off of the land for generations. The state even outlawed the planting of small family gardens to ensure the people were completely dependent on the party for their survival.

Nomadic herders in Central Asia and Kazakhstan were especially unaccustomed to this new way of life being forced upon them, and their resistance was met with brutal force by the Soviet state, who declared them "kulaks" and confiscated their herds. The resulting famine in this region killed between 1.5 million to

2 "The Continuous Working Week in Soviet Russia," *International Labour Review*, vol. 23, no. 2, February 1931.

2.3 million Kazakhs.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly to free-market capitalists, tankies support prisons and a police force, such as the Soviet secret police established by Lenin.

Tankies celebrate Lenin and Trotsky's massacres of socialist revolutionaries, including the Mensheviks, the sailors of Petrograd, the Socialist Revolutionaries, the anarchists, unfiliated peasants who had their food confiscated, and so on.

Tankies also celebrate murdering 'kulaks', a word they use to describe any peasant that resisted Soviet imperialism, but especially the Ukrainian peasants that resisted sending all their food to Russia, which they rightly guessed would lead to mass-starvation and one of the worst atrocities in history; the Holodomor genocide.

### **Lenin: Red Terror**

Some tankies support Lenin but reject Stalin and other later collectivist-capitalist dictators, saying they went too far. For this reason, it's important to talk about Lenin's long list of dirty deeds.

Lenin successfully hijacked a popular revo-

15 Sabol, Steven (2017). "The Touch of Civilization," *Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization*. University Press of Colorado. p. 47. ISBN 9781607325505



lution fought by the peasants and workers of Russia, sabotaging communism to install a state capitalist dictatorship with him as its life-long ruler, and then murdered most of the people who actually fought the revolution. This started a long history of Marxist-Leninists acting as parasitic opportunists: co-opting revolutionary movements started by Marxists and anarchists and thoroughly sabotaging them.

Lenin spoke of state-capitalism as if it would somehow lead to communism, but history shows us it only ever lead back to laissez-faire capitalism in every single case. Lenin:

*State capitalism would be a step forward as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in this country.*<sup>16</sup>

The insistence that forcing capitalism on a society that didn't have it before will somehow create communism at a later date is absolute

16 Lenin's Collected Works Vol. 27, p. 293.

nonsense. Lenin led the Red Terror, a program of Bolshevik terror against all opponents of his dictatorship, including those mentioned earlier. In the face of a third mass revolt of the Russians against a ruler; this time Lenin, his direct orders were to “introduce mass terror” to the population. He gave some of these orders from his hospital bed after an assassination attempt that the party used as justification for these brutal policies.

The execution methods during Lenin’s Red Terror were incredibly brutal, for example: Cages of rats tied to victim’s bodies and exposed to flame so the rats would gnaw their way through the victim to escape, and victims slowly fed footfirst into furnaces.<sup>17</sup>

*Certain Chekas specialised in particular lines of torment: The Kharkov Cheka went in for scalping and hand-flaying; some of the Voronezh Cheka’s victims were thrust naked into an internally nail-studded barrel and were rolled around in it; others had their forehead branded with a five pointed star, whilst members of the clergy were*

17 Leggett, George (1986). *The Cheka: Lenin’s Political Police*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-822862-7, pages 197 and 198.

*'crowned' with barbed wire; the Poltava and Kremenchug Chekas specialised in impaling the clergy (eighteen monks were impaled on a single day); also in Kremenchug, rebelling peasants were buried alive; at Ekaterinoslav victims were crucified or stoned to death, whilst at Tsaritsyn their bones were sawn through; the Cheka of Odessa put officers to death by chaining them to planks and then pushing them very slowly into furnaces, or else by immersion first in a tank of boiling water, then into the cold sea, and then again exposing them to extreme heat; at Armavir, the 'death wreath' was used to apply increasing constriction to victims' heads; in Orel and elsewhere water was poured on naked prisoners in the winter-bound streets until they became living statues of ice; in Kiev the living would be buried for half an hour in a coffin containing a decomposing body; also in Kiev, the imaginative Chinese Cheka detachment amused itself by putting a rat into an iron tube sealed with wire netting at one end, the other end being placed against the victim's body, and the tube heated until the maddened rat, in an effort to escape, gnawed its way into the prisoner's guts. Johnson, the negro*

*executioner at the Odessa Cheka, achieved special notoriety: he sometimes skinned his victims before killing them; after Odessa fell to the Whites in August 1919, he was caught and lynched by an angry mob. Women executioners could be crueler than men: Vera Grebeniukova, known as 'Dora', a beautiful young girl who was a colonel's daughter and a Chekist's lover, was reputed to have shot 700 prisoners during her two-and-a-half months' service with the Odessa Cheka.*

*The Chekas did not spare women and children. There are accounts of women being tortured and raped before being shot, wives of prisoners were sometimes blackmailed into sexual submission to Chekists. There were many cases of children between the ages of 8 and 16 being imprisoned; some were executed. The Chekas were occasionally honest enough to admit that they practised torture: in February 1920, such an admission was made by the Saratov Provincial Cheka at a meeting of the Saratov Soviet, and appeared in the press.*

In 1918, Lenin wrote to G. F. Fyodorov, ordering a massacre of sex workers in which

hundreds were killed.<sup>18</sup>

*Appoint three men with dictatorial powers (yourself, Markin, and one other), organise immediately mass terror, shoot and deport the hundreds of prostitutes who are making drunkards of the soldiers, former officers, and the like. Not a minute of delay.*

Lenin was an oppressor of the peasants and working classes, a despot, and, by 1918, the victorious enemy of the Russian revolution. A true counter-revolutionary. Which isn't too surprising, considering his bourgeois background and trade as a lawyer. He perfectly met the Marxist definition of a reactionary, yet tankies hold him up as the father of their Marxist-Leninist ideology and praise him as a great communist.

Lenin's acts later inspired further dictators in the 20th century who also misused the word "communism" to describe their brutal state-capitalist regimes. He effectively destroyed any chance humanity had to achieve communism in that century, and the damage he did to revolutionary action is still being felt today as the word "communism" has become synonymous with

6 *Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, [1976], Moscow, Volume 35, page 349.

“totalitarian state” in the public consciousness.

### **Driven by the Taste of Boot**

Regardless of the fact that “communism” actually means “a stateless, classless, moneyless society with common ownership of the means of production”, Marxist-Leninists support state-capitalist regimes that use money issued by the state and have a ruling class of party elites that control the means of production and enjoy extreme privileges compared to the average workers. Tankies claim that these hierarchical, oppressive regimes will somehow bring about communism at a later date.

Some tankies also adore Lenin’s even-more-brutal successor Stalin, and see nothing wrong with the fact that Stalin sent other communists, anarchists, gay people<sup>19</sup> and basically anyone that annoyed him or one of his cronies to death camps. Homophobia was strongly ingrained in the culture of Stalin’s USSR; anyone seen as anything less than hyper-masculine was in constant danger of being beat to death in his gulags:

*Passive homosexuals are not necessarily prisoners with gay inclinations, they are the*

19 *The Mordovian Marathon* (Jerusalem, 1979).

*unassertive, the timid, those who have lost a game of cards, those who have broken the camp code of ethics. Once you have the reputation of being a "cock," it is impossible to get rid of it. It follows you from camp to camp. And if, after transfer to a new place a "fallen" prisoner fails to reveal himself, sooner or later it is bound to come to light. Then punishment is unavoidable, and it will take the form of a collective reprisal often ending in death.*<sup>20</sup>

They celebrate Mao's "cultural revolution" and its murderous witch-hunts against supposed reactionaries who had the wrong haircut, wore makeup, owned a cat, wrote anti-authoritarian literature, or had furniture in their home. Following in Stalin's footsteps, Mao criminalized homosexuality and anyone suspected of this crime was arrested. Castro did the same thing in Cuba.

A lot of tankies defend the many atrocities of the DPRK dictatorship: essentially a monarchy, the ruler inherits his position from his father. Tankies will tell you with a straight face that this monarchy is somehow a path to communism.

20 Notes of a dissident (Ann Arbor, 1982).

They defend modern-day China's brutal oppression of its citizens, the use of deadly force to suppress democracy and quash protests, China's overseas colonialism and territory expansion, its concentration camps for minorities, and organized destruction of the environment for short-term profit.

When people bring up anarchists in relation to tankies, it's because anarchists particularly dislike the authoritarian regimes defended and idealized by tankies due to appalling events such as the Kronstadt rebellion, or the May Days in Spain. Anarchists are staunchly opposed to hierarchy, authority, rulers, states, and capitalism. All things that tankies enthusiastically embrace.

Tankies often preach "left unity" to encourage all leftists to aid their supposed revolution. But throughout history, once they succeed in seizing power—taking control of the state and replacing the government figures with their party members—they immediately begin labeling anyone who isn't toeing their party line as a "revisionist," or a "counter-revolutionary" and sending all dissenters (especially anarchists) to labor camps, or simply executing them and dumping their bodies in mass graves. These



purges always follow a Marxist-Leninist revolution and anarchists are usually the ones first up on the chopping block.

A tankie is anyone who presents themselves as a communist, but apologizes for torture, slavery, imprisonment, imperialism, capitalism, genocide. and the erasure of actual left-wing movements. A tankie is anyone who claims communism can be achieved by replacing a state with another state. A tankie is anyone who swears up and down that state capitalism, dictator personality cults, and ecosystem-destroying mass-industry will eventually lead to communism through the “withering away” of the brutal state that they uphold.

## **Reject Left-Unity**

Any attempt at comraderie with a tankie is doomed to fail. Regardless of what they claim, tankies aren't interested in any form of debate, compromise, or exchange of ideas with anarchists or communists. Their only goal is to give their dangerous ideology an appearance of legitimacy, to misrepresent it as a legit form of communism so they may further pollute radical politics with their tyrannical capitalist cult.

Anarchy is pure anathema to the tankie. We

espouse opposition to authoritarianism, hierarchy, bureaucracy, state-sanctioned violence, prisons, worker exploitation, ecosystem destruction, state-capitalism, and imperialism. This makes us, to the tankie, “reactionary counter-revolutionary imperialist scum.” Doublespeak like this is one of their defining traits.

Behind closed doors, they see us as a threat to their plans for strongman dictatorships, cults of personality, mega-industrial capitalism, and gulags as far as the eye can see. We are vermin to the tankie, fit only to be ridiculed and then exterminated once they seize power. Anarchy is their absolute worst fear. Anarchists are the biggest threat to their plans for party dictatorship.

They latch onto our movements and gradually corrupt them with reactionary rhetoric and divide-and-conquer tactics. Their goals aren't even slightly aligned with ours, but they use shame and cries of victimization to squirrel themselves into our spaces. Their demands—for “left unity” and an end to divisiveness and sectarianism—are obvious wolves in sheep's clothing and should be rejected outright.

We can't lose sight of the historical fact that genocide, nationalism, capitalism, bigotry, imperialism, struggle sessions, and mass

incarceration are some of the central tenets of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist practice, and whether they admit it publicly or not, things that all tankies believe necessary to ensure their vanguard's dictatorship and cement their own power in the party hierarchy.

Their only purpose in engaging you is to normalize their toxic beliefs and make us accepting of their presence in radical groups so they can grow their ranks.

If you welcome tankies into your spaces, if you engage tankies in civil discourse, if you entertain their repugnant ideas or buy into their absurd notions of left unity, or enable their attempts to create divisions between anarchists and sow discord, then they have already succeeded in poisoning your movement and rendering it useless.

# Anarcho-Capitalism?

From Wikipedia:

*Doublespeak is language that deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. Doublespeak may take the form of euphemisms (e.g. “downsizing” for layoffs, “servicing the target” for bombing), in which case it is primarily meant to make the truth sound more palatable. It may also refer to intentional ambiguity in language or to actual inversions of meaning. In such cases, doublespeak disguises the nature of the truth.*

The phrase “anarcho-capitalism” was coined by far-right white-nationalist Murray Rothbard as a way to appropriate anarchist terminology and dilute anarchy’s meaning, by associating it with all the things anarchists struggle against.

In one of his unpublished pieces, Roth-

bard even admitted “we are not anarchists, and those who call us anarchists are not on firm etymological ground, and are being completely unhistorical” because all anarchists have “socialistic elements in their doctrines” and “possess socialistic economic doctrines in common.”

Capitalism is just as brutal a hierarchy as statism and anyone claiming capitalists are capable of being anarchists is using malicious doublespeak to attack the anarchist movement by confusing the definitions of “hierarchy” and “authority.” Capitalism is a perverse authority that creates a multitude of oppressive totalitarian hierarchies. There is no way to make it compatible with anarchy.

These “anarcho” capitalist pretenders would have us believe that capitalism is voluntary when in reality private property rights can only be enforced violently, by an authority powerful enough to rule a society.

Rothbard’s followers claim to oppose the state but not capital. In reality, they wish to replace the state with wholly unregulated corporations, effectively making the corporations into totalitarian states that don’t have to answer to anyone.

For all intents and purposes, these so-

called anarcho-capitalists, propertarians, or voluntaryists wish to revert to feudalism and fully enslave workers, without the annoyance of human rights, labor and environmental laws, or any other controls on their business activities.

They wish to replace the state's police forces and military with private police and military that would work directly for corporations, with no accountability to the public and with the sole purpose of safeguarding the profits and personal safety of the owners of capital.

They have similarly hijacked the word libertarian, which was historically synonymous with anarchist (Kropotkin used both words interchangeably) and maintains its original meaning outside the USA.

Within the USA, *libertarian*, *voluntaryist*, *propertarian*, *deontological liberal*, *autarchist*, *anarcho-capitalist*, *paleocon*, *minarchist*, *neocon*, *rights-theorist*, *libertarian moralist*, and *social conservative* are all words that just mean “capitalist who doesn't like public accountability or paying taxes”<sup>21</sup>—with very minor differences (usually relating to how rights to private property will be enforced).

21 U.S. an-caps also just call themselves anarchists, so one needs to pay attention to context and content.

By creating far-right capitalist perversions of every anti-capitalist movement, the wealthy largely succeed in erasing the original revolutionary goals of a movement and replace them with more of the same capitalism, imperialism, poverty, genocide, and environmental destruction.

Anarcho-capitalism is an oxymoron and has nothing to do with Anarchy.

# **Burn the Bread Book: Industrial Communism Will Not Liberate You**

## **The True Cost of Bread**

For years I've watched a man drive his pick-up truck into the forest around me and cut down all the trees that aren't legally protected, that is, every tree that isn't a pine or an oak. The moment a carob or olive or hawthorn or mastic or strawberry tree grows big enough to burn, he cuts it down and drags it away for firewood. He even fells trees I planted, while smiling and waving at me like he's doing me a favor. I glare at him silently but don't say a word, knowing he has the full power of the state behind him.



He uses the wood to fuel his traditional bakery which has several large outdoor ovens. The much-loved industrial product he produces is bread; a product that has rapidly replaced all the native food-bearing plants of the area as they've been cut down to make room for wheat fields.

The villagers are proud of the bakery because it attracts visitors from all over the island and thus creates further opportunities for them to earn profit. The local bureaucracy—the democratically-elected village council—gives the baker free reign to do as he pleases since so many livelihoods depend on his bakery.

Because the baker cuts everything down as soon as it reaches human height, the trees never get big enough to fruit, so they don't spread their seeds and grow new trees. The forest slowly dwindles to nothing but pine trees and can no longer sustain most animal life. The climate dries, the soil erodes, the air grows stagnant, depleted of oxygen. All that's left in the few remaining forests that haven't been bulldozed to grow more wheat is a sterile pine desert.

The baker will soon no doubt lobby the village council to allow him to harvest the pine trees too, otherwise the all-important bakery will cease to operate when he runs out of legal

trees to fell.

In just a few years, all the fruits, nuts, and berries that sustained the people in the area for millennia are wiped out and replaced with a consumer product that is made from a single grain crop. A thriving ecosystem has been replaced with a wheat monoculture that could collapse at any moment and take with it the lives of everyone it feeds.

It's worth noting that the baker, like most people in my village, and in fact most people on the island, considers himself a communist. The village has a "communist party" clubhouse and they always elect "communist" local leaders and vote for "communist" politicians in the national elections.

Any anarchist worth their salt has no tolerance for these faux-communists, or tankies, and their brand of collectivist-capitalism because they cling to money, states, and rulers and really only embrace Stalinist politics because of the promise of cushy government jobs for them or their relatives.

Stalinist politicians openly buy votes by promising jobs in the public service to their supporters. A job in the public service here is a guaranteed free ride for life for you and your

family, with salaries that are multiple times higher than private sector salaries and benefits out of the wazoo—including multiple pensions. They get a full pension for each government sector they worked in, and the more-connected civil servants rotate through jobs in multiple sectors in the last few months before their retirement, to ensure the maximum pay-out possible.

I'm confident anyone reading this knows Stalinism is designed to enrich the bureaucrat class and give them complete control over citizens. No anarchist sees that shit as communism. But in a “real” communist society; an “anarcho-communist” society where money, state, and class have been abolished, the local baker would presumably still bake that bread, and since it would be offered freely to everyone far and wide, he'd need to bake a lot more of it and thus need more wood. More forests would be razed to keep the bread production going.

Everyone living in the village and anyone passing through, and people in faraway cities, will expect to have as much gourmet bread on their plates as they desire. More bakeries would need to pop up on the mountain as demand rises for delicious bread in the cities below, with the rural population working hard and doing their

duty to feed the hungry urban population.

Over the years, I've put a lot of thought into envisioning how the workers seizing the means of production might end the environmental devastation this bread production brings to the mountain. I struggle to see any scenario in which communism would stop the devastation of the ecosystem. The forests would continue to be razed to ensure that production doesn't slow down.

Free bread for everyone today means no bread (or any food) for anyone tomorrow, as the top-soil washes away, the climate warms, the wildlife goes extinct, and the whole mountain rapidly turns to desert. It's inevitable that soon even wheat will cease to grow in the fields surrounding the village.

Regardless of the economic system in place, the villagers being able to consume as many fresh loaves of baked bread as they can carry means all the forests in driving distance of the village are eviscerated, eventually all the fields become barren, the crops fail, and everyone starves. This is already well on its way to happening, and switching to a communist mode of production would do nothing to allay it.

"How would you feed people then, genius?"

I hear you scoff. The answer is simple; tried and tested for millennia. I wouldn't feed people. People would feed themselves instead of expecting others to labor to feed them; an entitlement that arose with industrial civilization. People would be inclined to protect the forests instead of bulldozing them for the supposed convenience of industrial food production if they picked their food directly from those forests everyday.

They'd protect the forests with their very lives, because they'd need the food that grows in the forests to survive without industrial farms, bakeries, and factories outsourcing food production—and hiding the ecocide they cause just out of sight of the villages and their carefully-manicured streets.

Bread and other industrial products alienate us from our ecosystem and cause us to stop caring about how our food is produced, so long as it's there in the store when we want to eat it. Putting food production back into the control of the individual is the only way to preserve the ecosystem. Direct food is the only anarchist mode of production. When other people are tasked with growing your food, they will take shortcuts because the food isn't going into their own mouths or the mouths of their loved ones. Food harvest-

ing needs to go back to being a way of life for every able-bodied person, rather than something industrial farm workers are tasked with to serve an elite class of privileged office workers who are completely disconnected from the food chain.

All over the world, complex centuries-old polyculture food-forests that sustained countless lives for generations are destroyed by the arrogance of industrial production, replaced for a short while by a wheat or corn monoculture so people can pick up their bread down the street from their home or workplace instead of muddying their feet to gather food from the wild as their ancestors did.

This convenience seems like “progress” to civilized people, at least until the destructive industrial agriculture process renders the wheat fields infertile and farms all over the world are turned into a vast uninhabitable dust bowl. A sustainable way of life that kept us alive and thriving for centuries has been tossed aside in favor of a short-lived attempt at industrial convenience that has already proven itself a horrible failure; bringing us and every other lifeform to the verge of extinction.

Industry is not sustainable. Industrial systems are all destructive. Communism, capital-

ism, fascism, they're all founded on ecocide.

The authority of the baker is upheld over everything else because domesticated people would rather consume free industrial bread for a few years than unlearn their destructive consumerist habits. If we are to survive these times of devastating ecological collapse, humans need to go back to fostering vast food forests as our ancestors did for millennia; producing and gathering our own food without destroying the very ecosystem that gives us life, in the name of luxury and convenience.

### **The People's Authority: How Anarcho-Communism is Authority Forming**

If someone kept cutting down all the trees to bake bread, the people who depend on the forest to survive would of course have to intervene to stop the loggers from destroying the forest and thus killing their way of life.

This happens in rainforests today where indigenous people—who have been let down by the state issuing licenses to corporate loggers, and turning a blind eye to illegal logging—instead take matters into their own hands and shut down the loggers using force. They put their lives on the line to do this, and many are

killed by loggers who value their profits over the lives of indigenous people. The indigenous people know that if they don't act to stop the loggers, the forests--their home--will be decimated and their way of life destroyed forever. They'll be forced into the cramped cities and have to labor all day everyday to buy the bread that stripped their forests bare.

So how would an anarcho-communist society deal with someone who cuts down all the trees to bake bread? In an anarcho-communist society, everyone will be environmentally conscious and consume sustainably, right...?

No. Not if you're engaging in any kind of critical thinking.

Loggers can only destroy forests at their current explosive rate if the society imbues them with authority. If they have no authority, there's nothing stopping others from using force to end their pillaging of our natural resources. Without the authority of civilization behind them, the loggers have much-diminished power and no real motive to risk their lives to fell trees.

Anarcho-communism is an industrial ideology based on the notion of seizing the means of production and then running the factories, saw mills, oil rigs, mines, and power plants demo-



cratically. Industrial civilization is an incredibly totalitarian authority that is nevertheless upheld by *anarcho-communist* theory, even though anarchists supposedly oppose all forms of authority.

In an industrial communist society, much like in a capitalist society, logging is necessary to further the industrial production on which the society is built. As long as production drives the system, trees will have to be felled for all kinds of reasons, from lumber and paper production to making way for crops and cattle.

So, logging is highly valued by the people who uphold the industrial society, and in a real-world scenario, these anarcho-communists would have to take measures to protect loggers from a small, uncivilized minority--the indigenous inhabitants. These measures are, by any definition, authoritarian, a monopoly on violence, a state in everything but name.

But since the loggers are providing this valued service to good, decent, reasoned, educated, domesticated, egalitarian, democratic, civilized anarcho-communists in big shiny cities, who are accustomed to a litany of luxury consumer products being delivered to their doors everyday, decidedly-authoritarian methods would be needed to ensure that the anarcho-loggers can

do their anarcho-work without facing retaliation from the primmie forest dwellers. These methods can easily be justified in the ancom's mind; there's nothing an ancom loves more than to justify authority with their mighty logic™.

So when faced with the conundrum that the anarcho-communist city needs lumber, paper, corn, and meat, and the only thing standing in the way of production are a few indigenous tribes, the ancom will put their anarcho-Spock ears on and declare, "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few." Just as capitalist and socialist states today violently suppress the indigenous people who take action to shut down logging and mining operations that quash their way of life, the anarcho-industrialist will send a red-and-black army to escort their red-and-black bulldozers and discipline anyone that interferes with the will of "the people."

The indigenous inhabitants of course won't give a shit that their forests are being felled by communists rather than by capitalists. They won't give a shit that the bulldozers are now owned collectively or that the land they've lived on for millennia has now been designated land of The People (the civilized voting majority) instead of the state's or some co.

The forest that nurtures the indigenous people and their children is still being decimated to maintain the lifestyles of city-dwellers. Their lives are still being ended because to civilized people, they're a backwards, regressive minority standing in the way of progress, damaging the revolution, inhibiting the growth of a glorious egalitarian civilization. The educated, progressive majority outvote them. Anyway, everyone who has spoken to a red anarchist knows primmies are dirty reactionary ableists who want to stop us from building wheelchair and drug factories, right?

Civilized people always have pushed the notion that the common good, or the good of the many, will always outweigh the needs of individuals or small groups of people, ever since Aristotle, in his "The Aim of Man" wrote:

*The good of the state is of greater and more fundamental importance both to attain and to preserve. The securing of one individual's good is cause for rejoicing, but to secure the good of a nation or of a city-state is nobler and more divine.*

Communism is even more adamant in this "the will of the majority is paramount" shtick, going as far as to declare the industrial-worker

class as the only voice that matters, with everyone needing to become part of the worker class in order to abolish class differences.

This logic is why the USSR, China and other communist experiments forced collectivization on self-sufficient indigenous peoples and then slaughtered them when they inevitably resisted. If people won't consent to being evicted from their ancestral lands to work on the industrial farms and factories that fuel the destruction of their homes, they're branded kulaks and counter-revolutionaries and reactionaries and are systemically genocided, usually by destroying their food sources.

Industrial goods are valued by industrial society over the forest and its inhabitants because domesticated people want to eat bread and microwaved pizza and the real cost of those products (environmental destruction) is of no real concern to industrial society beyond empty gestures like an occasional "save the rainforests" or "go vegan" banner.

The inhabitants of the forests and their strange foreign culture are too far removed from the busy cities for the average urbanites to involve themselves in their plight. Even the civilized rural people who live around the forests are

forever striving to urbanize their villages in the unending quest for upwards mobility. In my experience, they'll happily trade every tree in sight for a gourmet bakery, Apple Store or coffee-shop so they can feel as civilized as the people in the big cities who tend to look down on them for being "hillbillies" or "country bumpkins."

"The people in the big cities of Sao Paulo and Rio, they want us to live on picking Brazil nuts," a farmer says. "That doesn't put anyone's kid in college."<sup>22</sup>

The settler-farmers who are burning what's left of the Amazon rainforest to the ground say they're doing it for their children... To make the cash to pay for their children to be educated and get good jobs in the city. It shouldn't be controversial for me to say civilized people value their civilized life and will always put their civilized needs before the needs of uncivilized others.

Civilized people can relate to their civilized neighbours who have the same struggles as them: paying their bills, educating their kids, buying good insurance, washing their car, de-

22 "Brazilian Farmers Believe They Have the Right to Burn the Amazon," <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/brazilian-farmers-believe-they-have-the-right-to-burn-the-amazon-875879/>

ciding where to go on vacation, renovating their kitchens, choosing the next Netflix show to binge watch. So it's not surprising that they'll do everything they can to prop up civilized people and kick down the uncivilized people who stand in the way of their quest for ever-increasing industrial comforts.

I can already see the denial settling on some of your faces as I type. "But us anarcho-communists aren't like capitalists, we're good, caring, humane people. We'll make industry green, we'll manage the forests in a sustainable manner using direct democracy, unions, unicorns, and equality!"

Why would anyone swallow that crock of shit? Why would thoroughly domesticated people, used to all the comforts of destructive industrial civilization, suddenly decide to forgo those comforts because of democracy? Why would 7.7 billion people suddenly change how they live because anarcho-communism has been declared? How would ancom civilization make industry green when it's clearly demonstrable that all industry is destructive to the environment and to wild people, and that modelling a society on an industrial system has had disastrous results throughout history, regardless of

the name of the attached ideology?

All controlled mass society, including every historical attempt to build a communist society, has created authority--bodies of people holding power over others. That power grows over time and takes the communist society further and further away from its revolutionary origins. Every indication is that authority would continue to be manifested with industrial anarcho-communism. There is no evidence that anarcho-communism would avert authority when it's so dependent on destructive, exploitative, alienating, domesticating industry and the control and domination of a global population of workers.

### **All Industrial Goods Free for All People: A Recipe for Disaster**

In communism everything is free for the taking and resources are often treated as if they're infinite. If you decide you need something, you take it from the communal store. Kropotkin said no one has the right to judge how much an individual needs, except the individuals themselves.

Since most reds hold that resources should be allocated according to need, decisions would be made to determine who in the community has need of the biggest shares of resources.

I know most ancoms, like Kropotkin, claim every individual will just take whatever they need (want) from communal stores, but I'm going to cry foul on that because it's really not practical in an industrial society. Resources aren't infinite and no one is going to spend their life doing gruelling manual labor and then just give everything they produce away to some random stranger who shows up at the communal store with a dumpster truck and says "I need your community's entire monthly output of goods today, so load it up." For some reason ancoms think assholes would cease to exist in a communist society. Why would anyone work their asses off, doing menial manual labor just to watch some shitlord drive away with everything they produced because he announces he needs it?

"But as woke anarcho-communists in an advanced fully-automated luxury communist society, labor will in fact be quite limited and fun because we can divide duties between all our comrades! And profit will no longer be a concern since everything we make will be given to anyone that wants it free of charge, so we don't need to worry about marketing our products and that will further minimize the amount of labor we'll do, giving us ample leisure time



to enjoy the fruit of our production!"

For the purposes of cold-hearted mockery, I'm slightly paraphrasing an ancom who responded to an early draft of this piece, but yeah... What fantasy realm are ancoms living in where all the massive problems posed by industrial production (including the ongoing extinction of near-every lifeform on Earth) will evaporate when you remove profit and marketing from the equation?

I keep saying this in my writing but again: In an industrial society that aims to give everyone in the world equal access to consumer goods, industry does not decrease; it increases. If everyone in the world suddenly has free and equal access to the mountains of wasteful shit that Western consumers consider necessary, not only would production need to massively increase, but we would run out of resources much more rapidly.

That's assuming anyone would even want to work in the mines and factories in a supposedly equal society if they no longer had guns to their heads. Why would anyone go back down into that mine once their chains are broken? Does anyone honestly think those Congolese kids give a shit if you have a new phone every year? Should they really be expected to sacrifice

themselves for your entitlement? So you can continue to live in luxury with all your little conveniences? Fuck that.

In a real world implementation of industrial communism, communities will no doubt quickly impose limits on what can be taken from communal stores after a few people take way more than they have any right to and other people go without as a result. Kropotkin might insist we'll all be happy toiling away all day to make this consumerist shit just to give it away to random strangers at the end of the day, but he was a privileged scholar who never had to work a day in his life, so what do you expect?

Industrial society right now is fed by the ceaseless labor of billions of exploited people in the Global South. People are forced to toil in mines from childhood to procure the materials that other people (also including children) then assemble into consumer goods in factories, all for starvation wages. This is debilitating, dangerous work that leaves these people physically broken after a few years.

Anyway, let's play along with communist mythology for a bit to get to my next point. In an ideal communist society (where I guess minerals are somehow found equally all across

the planet and not overwhelmingly located in the Global South—unlike in the real world), outsourced labor would presumably go away because communists would never exploit workers in distant lands (whoever heard of an imperialist communist, right? Right??) So production would be localized, and the goods would be distributed according to need.

For resources to be allocated according to need, you'll have some kind of group judging what each person's needs are and what resources each should be given.

There are lots of factors to take into consideration when deciding someone's needs, like how far they live from work, how far they live from the store, how many calories they burn doing the labor they do, the size of their family, their dietary restrictions, disabilities they might have, their particular metabolism, how many parties they throw, how many friends they have and thus might invite to the parties, their religious and cultural practices, the size of their house, the size of their garden, the type of insulation their house has and how quickly it loses heat, the fuel efficiency of their car... I could list hundreds more things but I'll stop before you stop reading.

Giving bureaucrats this power means

certain favored groups and individuals will be rewarded and less desirable groups and individuals will be neglected, or even punished. This is the nature of authority. You'll need a body of full-time bureaucrats to collect all this data and measure how it should determine your share of the pie, and those bureaucrats are going to have biases. If a computer does it, the programmer will have biases. And you'd still need bureaucrats to collect the data and feed it to the computer. Then they could easily feed incorrect or selective data to the computer because of their biases.

It's always felt like a recipe for corruption and exploitation to me for a bureaucracy to determine someone's worth... which is probably why Kropotkin stipulated that everyone should be able to just take whatever they themselves decide they need from the stores.

Of course, the real solution would be to not base your proposed utopian society on industrial production in the first place. Promising unlimited industrial production—because everyone will voluntarily agree to work real hard in the factories and mines and slaughterhouses and the goods will be distributed to everyone everywhere somehow while maintaining a sustainable ecological green solarpunk paradise—

-just makes you a smug liar. No different from a grinning politician promising to give us freedom, liberty, and prosperity if we vote for him.

The only red anarchist tendency that made a modicum of practical sense in my mind was anarcho-collectivism, because at least the workers would receive the direct value of their labor hours instead of having external bodies decide how much value to assign to them as a person.

If you're going to spend your life toiling in a factory or farm to produce goods for other people, would you really want a bureaucrat or a committee or even a direct voter body deciding how much you deserve for that labor, while giving more to someone else doing the same job (or a much easier one), because of potentially biased reasons?

Regardless, anarcho-collectivism still only really values the workers who are most willing to submit to the factory grind and put in the most hours. Anarcho-collectivism still holds up ecocidal industry and luxuries for cityfolk, above all life on the planet. So that 19th century ideology isn't going to save you either. Throw it right in the trash with the bread book because this reform-industrial-society charade isn't helping when the planet is on fire.

If industrial communism were actually implemented in the real world, you can be relatively certain that some kind of authority would be put in place to prevent bad actors from showing up at the store and taking a community's entire monthly production. People would need to police the store and judge whether someone is worthy of taking as much as they're taking. They'd need to become authorities, upholders of law and order, purveyors of justice.

A state exists wherever an authority can authorize and legitimize violence. There is no way for an anarchist to justify a coercive, authoritarian institution, such as a police force that will be biased against minority groups and lead to the accumulation and abuses of power by the dominant group, including those policing.

A society that mass produces goods and distributes them in communal stores will manifest itself as a state, regardless of Kropotkin's insinuations that everyone will work voluntarily and then take whatever they want from the stores. There's no practical scenario where industrial labor is truly voluntary. There's no practical scenario on this Earth of rapidly diminishing returns where "free" stores won't need to be policed to deny unlimited goods to

those who the governing body decides are less worthy of the fruits of their labor.

Anarcho-communism simply isn't revolutionary, as long as we are depleting all our resources in the name of industrial civilization, which is required by anarcho-communism: an industrial, work-based ideology based on civilizing the land and its inhabitants.

Every anarchist should understand the difference between isolated force and authority, but very few self-identifying social anarchists seem interested in this, content to prate on about justified authority, debating "how an anarcho-communist police force could work," and excitedly discussing Chomsky's latest speech telling them to vote for a lesser-evil neoliberal politician.

I know I sound bitter, but for years I've been disillusioned with the majority of red anarchists I come into contact with, and they only seem to get worse as industrial society plods on and the sands and seas climb further up our necks.

Anarcho-communism is not the solution to authority, it's simply a skin-deep re-brand of authority. There's a reason so many ancoms strive to justify authority. They don't actually care about anarchy.

## **Is Communism Always Authority-Forming?**

In my mind, communism can only work outside of industrial mass society. A small community gathering or growing supplies and freely sharing them with the rest of the community. Each community trading with other small communities. Marx and Engels ironically dubbed this hunter-gatherer form of society that had long existed in human history as “primitive communism” and suggested it was inferior to their advanced industrial communism that valued the factory and centralized city life above all else.

Mass industry requires mass agriculture, mass labor, mass transport, mass resource extraction, mass construction, mass policing, mass military... Mass society and will only lead right back to capitalism and statism because it's so unwieldy and authority forming. Any communist tendency built around industrial exploitation is going to create all kinds of fucked up hierarchies and just lead us right back to the apocalyptic status quo.

Most communists I've talked to about this are unable to accept that some people will still act like assholes if capitalism collapses, which I'd probably find endearing if these people weren't such giant assholes themselves; call-



ing me a privileged reactionary for daring to suggest their blessed ideology might have some flawed logic. They insist everyone will cease being selfish assholes once capitalism is done away with because “assholes are only assholes as long as capitalism pits them against each other.”

Even if we wake up one morning and marketing, consumer culture and wealth are all done away with, we still have generations of indoctrination in authoritarian behavior to contend with. That doesn't go away overnight. But even without consumer culture to guide them, people are still completely capable of being assholes. Going back to before mass society even existed, people would murder each other and take their stuff. They'd raid each other's settlements, they'd steal their children, they'd fight over territory and cultural differences. These aren't things that were invented by capitalism and they won't go away just because communism is declared.

People aren't inherently just or unjust. Humanity is not good or bad. Every person is an individual, each with different experiences, motivations, traumas. Communism expects everyone to be altruistic. Capitalism expects everyone to act out of greed and self preservation. Neither is true because both are ideologically driven

worldviews that attempt to define human nature in order to instruct us how to behave by instilling us with their morals. People are greedy, people are generous, people are kind, people are mean-spirited. Every person in the world is all of these things and more. People are not defined by one single personality trait their entire lives.

I'm haunted by every shitty thing I've ever done and I'm sure I'll do more shitty things yet, despite my best intentions. No one is above making mistakes.

Mutual aid is a great thing, but it needs to be earned. There are people in our lives who we trust and people we can't stand to be around. Not everyone is deserving of the products of our labor. Some people in the world will always try to exploit you, even if they already have everything their hearts could possibly desire. Some people will be kind to you no matter how big an asshole you are.

I've been accused by communists of being cynical, of being regressive and counter-revolutionary because I don't buy into the communist notion that humans are inherently good and they just need the right industrial system to bring that good out of them.

Any society where I'm expected to just sit

back and watch as a logger destroys my ecosystem because he's serving the "greater good" isn't a society I want any part of. I value my autonomy over the desires of traumatized workers pushing buttons for eight hours a day in a city far removed from me. I'd rather take the logger's chainsaw away than fiddle my thumbs as he takes everything I know--and to hell with whatever bureaucratic process enshrined him with the right to decimate the forest to give bread to the workers. Fuck the workers and their bread and their fully-automated luxury communism and their divine democratic rights.

There's simply no reason to believe exploitative assholes will go away if communism is ever enacted.

There's a man I know who constantly exploits me for my labor, and I always go along with it. He dangles a carrot on a stick in front of me every time, promising that after I help him, he'll hook me up to his well so I can have free water for my trees. For years he's made this promise.

I've spent countless hours doing dangerous work for this guy with no reward. He always disappears after I do the work without giving me what he promised. Then the next week he wakes

me up again at 6am on a Saturday by honking his horn, apologizes for not getting around to hooking me up to the well yet, saying he was too busy or in the hospital or had a family emergency, promises he'll do it this week, and then I'm hanging off a cliff or a roof repairing pipes for him all day while he barks orders at me.

I do it because I'm a fucking pushover who can't say no to people due to my ridiculous kind nature. But whenever I ask him for anything, I'm met with a blank stare, an abrupt subject change, or a sorry excuse. I was stranded with a two-hour walk down the mountain last week when my car broke down, and he drove right around me and didn't even slow down. When I saw him later, he swore on his life that he didn't see me because the sun was in his eyes. I nodded and shrugged.

Communism wouldn't stop this lying dipshit from exploiting me; he'd still need someone to fix his leaky pipes, start up his diesel generator, saw off the upper branches of his olive trees, and climb shoddy makeshift structures for him regardless of the economic system in place. He'd still give me a sob story about his painful ulcer and I'd still do the hard work to spare him the pain of doing it himself. He wouldn't stop being an exploitative asshole just

because democracy is installed in the workplace. He wouldn't start practising mutual aid when he goes to great lengths to avoid all work and shames other people into doing it for him.

Red anarchists throw every insult in the book at me when I voice my doubts about their wistful ideologies; condemning me for being critical of the amazing breadman Kropotkin or their "green industry" tsar Professor Bookchin... It's hard to give my perspective as an indigenous anarchist to these people who are so hostile to any worldview that doesn't validate their luxurious industrial lifestyle, and their driving desire to make that lifestyle more democratic in order to receive a bigger share of the pie. Between the shouts of "reactionary lifestyle" and "dirty primmie," I try to explain my perspective to them: I see suffering in the world and I want to make sense of it. I'm not satisfied just handwaving it away and clinging to fanciful utopian ideologies designed to energize European factory workers from the 1800s. I don't believe red industry will cure society of all its ills or free humans from their chains.

The warehouse I've worked in for more than a decade will not become magically liberating if I'm given the power of democracy. It'll

still be a miserable place filled with toxic pesticides that are slowly killing me.

Some ancoms will no doubt unironically reply to this piece with reasoning that amounts to “no, actually, anarcho-communist industry will be a utopia because Kropotkin said so.” They’ll quote a bunch of literature to me that is nothing but empty promises by long-dead European philosophers for industrial egalitarianism. I’ve really run out of patience for that line of thinking. It’s no different than a 7 year old trying to win an argument by yelling “because my dad said so.” But when it comes down to it, that’s all most reds can do: quote their heroes and cling to the hope that they’ll be proven right some day. That hope is what keeps them going as their miserable civilized lives burn the world up. “All our suffering will end once we have democracy in the workplace.” Those poor, deluded, hope-filled souls.

Everything I know tells me industry cannot be made green any more than capitalism can be made ethical. All agricultural industrial society in history has resulted in ecocide and eventually collapse. When you extract resources, burn fuel, manufacture goods, and distribute them to millions or billions of people, you do

real irreversible harm to ecosystems and human lives. Ancoms are not magical beings who can somehow escape the consequences of this because they're supposedly good and egalitarian.

If anarcho-communism were ever attempted, half the nuances it has will be thrown out for being fantastic, half-baked and impossible to implement in an industrial mass-society. Compromises will be made to make the system functional. A lot of things have been claimed about communism, but whenever its been attempted in real life models, almost none of those claims have come to fruition and they never will because

- a) resources aren't infinite.
- b) industrial output has a high hidden cost, and most importantly,
- c) work isn't voluntary.

No matter how much you swear you'll make labor democratic, no one is laboring because they really want to. They're laboring because the system requires them to labor to survive. No amount of democracy will stop the system from asserting its authority on everyone inside its suffocating walls. Abolishing the borders between territories will do nothing if industrial civilization continues to box us in

and starve us if we dare to resist its rule. If we can't escape civilization, the whole world is nothing more than one big prison.

Civilized people labor to create consumer goods because the system gives them no other option if they want to survive. The only way people will continue to toil in the factories and warehouses in "a communist society" is if they are forced to by the system. No free hunter gatherer will voluntarily give up their freedom to stand at an assembly line pushing buttons so other people can have Corn Flakes, weedkiller, and AAA batteries. It's something that needs to be forced on humans by domestication and the joined threat of violence and starvation that props up the industrial system.

Industry is a clear authority and anarcho-communist theory is completely oblivious to that. Anarcho-communism is nothing more than an attempt to reform the tyranny of civilization to give it a sly smile. It's the anarchist version of Barack Obama promising change but just delivering more of the same and expecting you to celebrate it.



## **Seize the Means of Destruction!** **(And fucking burn it to the ground...)**

Ancoms insist “people would choose to produce only what is needed” in an anarcho-communist society. That word “needed” is really useless. Anyone can define anything as being needed, but almost none of the things defined as such actually are. This is why industrial communism isn’t really compatible with anarchy: anything and everything will be defined as needed by domesticated people, no matter how authority-forming the things are. If it means they get to keep consuming, anarcho-consumers would happily define everything from pesticides to slaughterhouses to automobile plants as *needed*. This is the power of democracy. Whatever narrative the collective adopts becomes the official, approved narrative and anyone questioning it will be seen as subversive and dangerous and a threat to order and decency.

This needed-industry argument is a lot like the justified-authority argument a lot of red “anarchists” keep making to uphold every shitty authority they cling to all the way up to the state, prisons and the police.

Usually they’ll just rename these authorities “the commune,” “the social re-integration

facility,” and “the peacekeepers,” and be satisfied that they’ve come up with real change. It’s meaningless. Domesticated people will not allow themselves to see past the carefully manufactured alienating world they’ve inherited. Very few civilized people are willing to risk losing what they perceive as the great comforts of industrial civilization.

Even if they recognize how strangling these comforts actually are, to them and everything else on the planet, instead of rejecting them outright, they draw up elaborate plans to reform the way those comforts are produced and dispersed. Most of these plans--when deconstructed and debullshitted--amount to little more than slapping the word “anarcho” in front of everything and trusting it’ll be all good because it’s anarchized now.

Ancoms aren’t going to suddenly decide to give up their phones, Doritos, and washing machines when they figure out that they’re environmentally destructive. They’ll just rubber-stamp all the things they want as *needed*, *eco-friendly*, *sustainable*, and/or *green*, and call it a day. And we’ll be expected to keep working our miserable jobs and like it because now they’re anarcho-jobs in an anarcho-society with

anarcho-exploitation and anarcho-masters.

Keeping people in the mines, keeping factories making those *needed* consumer goods, will require massive authority, another iteration of capitalism in all but name, just like the so-called communist states of Russia, China, and North Korea. Not a trace of communism will survive once industrial civilization is done grinding everything up. There's nothing about anarcho-communism that will spare it from the same fate. Claiming to be anti-authority rings hollow when you cling to authoritarian industrial civilization, workerism, and all the other authorities that ancoms at large decide are justified.

A bureaucracy will always form in an organized mass society, which is why industrial communism isn't tenable. It's why every time industrial communism has been attempted, it has simply been as a perverse collective capitalism with even more centralized power than regular-flavor capitalism. The bureaucracy quickly morphs into a state, and by definition the society is longer communist. But of course, it'll keep calling itself "communist" and ensure the distinction between capitalism and communism remains paper-thin so people won't be able to envision a better world than the brutal

industrial wasteland we've all been born into.

Any system that allocates resources and polices people is functionally a state, regardless of what it brands itself as.

All implementations of industrial society have failed to liberate people, instead making their lives more and more miserable with each stage of industrialism, and to claim that attaching "anarcho" to the front of an industrial system will make a difference is absolutely fucking ridiculous.

Communism has never succeeded at liberating us historically and will not suddenly succeed just because you promise you're better than other communists and you and all your super-libertarian ancom comrades will pick up cans of paint and make all the chimney stacks bright green.

Authoritarian behavior will only ever be repeated if society is structured around authoritarian institutions like industrialism and democracy. Both Marx and Kropotkin's communism are centred around these institutions because their ideologies require that people be controlled by bureaucracy. Whether it be decentralized democratic bureaucracy or centralized party bureaucracy is irrelevant. The result is

the same: Authority and control.

Without this bureaucracy, the society would descend into anarchy. Yes, wonderful, amazing, freeing anarchy. The very thing every red fears most because it would mean they'd no longer get to forcibly structure society and people around their sacred ideology and force their authority and morality on them.

Domesticated people sit trapped in sterile little boxes, fed a steady drip of pesticide and high-fructose corn syrup as they labor, consume, consume, consume and then die.

This isn't life. This isn't anarchy. This is a waking nightmare, a depraved hell-world that has all of us thoroughly brainwashed into thinking it's acceptable.

Branding it "communist" or "libertarian socialist" or "democratic" or "egalitarian" or "decentralized" or "anarcho-communist" will not end the nightmare. It will not stop the planet-wide ecocide civilization has wrought on all living things. The means of destruction being controlled by industrial workers instead of industrial bosses *will not stop the ecocide*.

Seizing the factories and making them democratically managed as all reds yearn to do won't do anything to save us from violence,

misery, alienation, and eventual extinction.

The only way to destroy authority is to burn industry to the ground before it devours every last lifeform on the planet.

The only chance we have to survive what's coming in the next few years as our ecosystems are collapsing all around us is to tear down every factory and close every port and slice up every road until civilization is in ruins.

But in all honesty, we're not going to do that. We're going to watch television and sip iced tea and we're going to wait for the end. I'm going to keep watching in silence as the bread man fells the last remaining wilderness.

Maybe the planet will recover somewhat in a few millennia and maybe the next lifeform that evolves will have more sense than the desertmakers. This is the last hope I cling to.







You have demolished their sublime mountains to construct your shopping malls and marinas. You have drained their great lakes to plant your carefully manicured golf courses. Felled their majestic forests to graze your billion cows. Desecrated their vast oceans with your rotten, putrid waste.

You're driven to control Terra, to change the course of their rivers, to reshape their shorelines and modify their lifeforms to suit your rapacious appetite. You can't fathom of a world where you don't own the earth below your feet; posses everything Terra created as your own.

You are imperious to assume Terra will be so affected by a fleetingly short-lived and short-sighted creature as yourself. If it takes a million of your lifetimes, Terra will wash away the volumes of excrement you have soiled their surface with.

You spent your wretched life desperately cutting your name into Terra's flesh, but Terra's wounds will callus over, creature. Long after the arrogant grin you wear on your lips has turned to dust with the rest of your foul corpse, Terra will regenerate. All the beautiful, disparate beasts you have eradicated during your brief gluttonous tantrum will be re-born. The trees will rise again in magnificent groves as far as the eye can see. Everything you took will be reclaimed.

